THE EFFECT OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION UPON THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA 1820-1870

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--INTRODUCTION--

A profitable as well as commonly neglected field of historical investigation is that of American Church history. It can not be denied that religion has had an important part in shaping America's moral, social, and political structure. On all sides the interplay of religious and secular forces are quite apparent, and even in the great problems that are facing the nation and the world of today the church occupies no mean place. It is to be regretted that the strong opposition to religious education in schools supported by public taxation has been largely responsible for the lack of interest in church history in America's public colleges and universities. Instead this fruitful field of study has been left to the denominational institutions where, in many instances, the subject has lost many of its historical aspects and has been colored with abstract questions of doctrinal error and truth.

There seems to be a real need for a study of church history in its broader aspects showing the interplay of religious forces in Europe and America. Any attempt to deal with this subject from purely an American point of view, without taking cognizance of the spiritual forces that were stirring the European peoples in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, would inevitably lead to erroneous conclusions. With the surge of population from the British Isles, Germany, and Scandinavia to the United States in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, the religious structure of the United States could hardly be expected to escape the influence of European movements. The impact of Lutheran immigration from Germany and the Scandinavian countries left a profound and lasting impression upon the American Lutheran Church of colonial origin.

Unlike some of the leading religious denominations in the United States the Lutheran Church has never been pledged to any particular form of organization, but it has emphasized the importance of doctrinal purity and conformity with the fundamental confessions of the church. Even in this respect a divergence has prevailed with respect to the symbols except the Augsburg Confession which all have accepted in whole or with slight modifications. The various governmental systems which existed in the Lutheran states of Germany and in the Scandinavian states at the time of the Reformation

precluded any specific form of organization and the establishment of any centrally constituted authority. The respective sovereigns were allowed considerable latitude in matters of church administration. They adopted systems best suited to their particular needs ranging from the hierarchical system of Sweden to varied consistorial forms in the respective German states.

Lacking any centralized system of control the Lutheran Church in America was from its very beginning an independent entity left to shape its own corporate existence. Though German Lutheran divines like the Halle group in the latter half of the eighteenth century and certain leaders of the Lutheran revival of the nineteenth century, from time to time, showed an interest in the Church of America they were never particularly interested in linking the church overseas with any organized body in Germany. From the first the Lutheran Church in America has been as independent of foreign control as any other denomination organized upon a strictly congregational basis. It may justly be said, the Lutheran Church in America is no more European than any other of the Protestant organizations.

Without a doubt, the natural interest of the American historian in the resurgence of liberalism and constitutionalism in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century has caused him to lose sight of the momentous religious

movements that effected the church in America. In spite of the prominence accorded the German political refugees, the more conservative Catholic and Lutheran immigrants, who outnumbered the "Fortyeighters" by about two to one in the fifties, have made permanent contributions to the religious life of America. The Lutheran immigrants, bound to no particular form of church organisation and influenced by the nationalistic and confessional awakening in Germany, found themselves out of sympathy with the Lutheran Church that had been organized in the eighteenth century.

In the study of the "Effect of German Immigration on the Lutheran Church in America from 1820 to 1870" certain terms have been used to differentiate the Lutheran immigrant from the descendants of the Lutherans who found their way to America in the eighteenth century. The Lutherans of colonial background are designated as "American Lutherans" while the confessional Lutheran immigrants are spoken of as "Old Lutherans", on account of their decided reversion to sixteenth century Lutheranism and a rigid adherence to the confessions of the church. The writer has attempted to approach the subject from an historical rather than a doctrinal point of view and has attempted to occupy a neutral position as far as confessions, dogmas and creeds are concerned.

In closing might I remark that the Missouri Lutheran Synod has available a vast and invaluable treasure of source

material for future historical and sociological study in its numerous congregations scattered throughout various parts of the globe. It is to be hoped that it might in the near future utilize its efficient organization in accumulating this remarkable supply of source material in some centrally located place like St. Louis, Missouri, or Valparaiso, Indiana. I know of no greater contribution that the "Missouri" congregations can make to posterity and to the synod than to cooperate in such a service.

CHAPTER I

REASONS FOR GERMAN EMIGRATION 1820-1860

Lutheran emigration to the United States was determined by economic and religious conditions which prevailed in northern and eastern Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of these the economic conditions figured more prominently than the religious. In fact, in the very years in which the exodus from Germany was greatest the religious grievances had been overcome and conservative Lutheranism had triumphed. It was no mere accident, nor was it due exclusively to religious conditions, that so many Germans came to the United States from regions in which religious and political conservatism was strongest. The economic readjustments which followed the Wars of Liberation made available funds for many who desired another opportunity in the "land of promise".

The Germans who came to the United States between 1820 and 1860 belonged to two distinct cultural groups, each

coming from rather well defined geographical sections. The larger of these, who figured so prominently in the history of Lutheranism in America, was from eastern Germany where a strong middle class was lacking, and the population was divided into two agrarian classes, the baronial lord (Rittergutsbesitzer) and the agricultural day laborer. Neither had been influenced by the currents of eighteenth century enlightenment. They were religiously conservative and adhered to the confessional tendencies of the sixteenth century. Of these Ernst Brunckon writes: "The large numbers of peasants from northern and eastern Germany, who took up farms, or remained in the cities as laborers, were utterly impervious to radical and infidel influences. They were then as now the mainstay of Lutheranism".[1]

A second group from southwestern and Rheinland Germany, though small in proportion to the total number of arrivals during this period, contained a considerable number of persons destined to play an important part as intellectual and political leaders among the German immigrant population

1 "Political Refugees in the United States during the period from 1815-1860", In Deutsch Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter 1904, 42.

of the United States. It comprised political exiles and persons who sought refuge in America from reactionary political conditions. Many were highly trained men entirely out of sympathy with the religious and political conformists of eastern Germany. Even today, after three quarters of a century, the cleavage which developed between these groups in Germany still persists in America.[2]

From the sixteenth century until well into the nineteenth century the landed estates of eastern Germany, the stronghold of Lutheranism, were extended and consolidated and the peasantry confronted with economic disaster. The lords of the manor, vulgarly called "Junker", increased their holdings by a policy of eviction and thereby brought nearly all of the land under their direct control. This process was hastened when eastern Germany came to be the granary for England, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries in the latter part of the eighteenth century and for the Napoleonic armies in the early years of the nineteenth century. In fact, the peasant who lived by his own holdings had almost disappeared at the conclusion of the Napoleonic Era.[3]

2 Brunsken, op.cit., 1-14, 28, 42.

3 J. H. Clapham, Economic Development of France and Germany 1815-1819, (Cambridge 1921), 35-39, 54; Karl Lamprecht, Deutsche Geschichte der jüngsten Vergangenheit une Gegenwart (Berlin 1913) I, 366-368, 380; James Westfall Thompson, "East German Colonization in the Middle Ages" in Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1915, 123-150.

The Stein-Hardenberg emancipation edict of 1807-1808 played into the hands of the "Junker", for the emancipation of the serf afforded him a more efficient and economical supply of agricultural laborers. Even the status of the peasant holding heritable land was lowered by having to surrender one third of his holdings to the "Junker" for a clear title to the remainder, or pay a rental should he wish to retain all.[4] The cultivation of potatoes, beets, and other crops upon the land formerly allowed to lie fallow by no means offset the demands attending an increase in population stimulated by agricultural and industrial expansion occasioned by war conditions.[5]

This abnormal development on the estates of the "Junker" intensified the disaster which came with the reorganization of Europe after the Congress of Vienna. A complete economic demoralization occurred between 1820 and 1854. England, Holland and the Scandinavian countries imposed high tariffs upon grain imports to protect and stimulate domestic production. Italy and Sicily sought to become agriculturally self-sufficient. In France the increase in

4 Clapham, op.cit., 43-46; Lamprecht, op.cit.,I:381-388; Werner Sombart, Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, (Berlin 1903) 88-89, 145.

5 Lamprecht, op.cit., 366-369, 387, 393.

small peasant proprietorships made for a more intensive system of agriculture and an attending agricultural independence. The export of grain from Danzig and Elbing from 1821-1825, was only one seventh the amount of that from 1801-1805, while wheat was but one third of its former value. Live stock prices likewise showed similar declines.[6] The domestic system of manufacture on the estates of the "Junker" could not compete with British factory made goods dumped on the Continental markets after 1815. With a favorable balance of trade gold from the Continent flowed into the coffers of England. Germany passed through a period of deflation. In Westphalia alone the forced sale of ninety-eight estates resulted in a net loss of $414,000. In an official report of 1851 it was estimated that eighty percent of the baronial landlords of eastern Germany lost their estates during this crisis.[7]

The potato blight in Europe between 1845 and 1847 and the abnormal weather conditions which destroyed the crops before they could be harvested brought northeastern Germany face to face with famine conditions. Peasants and artizans

6 Sombart, op.cit., 88-90; Sartorious von Waltershausen, Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 185-191 (Jena 1920), 39.
7 Sombart, op.cit., 89-90; von Waltershausen, op.cit., 40-41.

dependent upon the potato cultivated on their garden plot could not afford to substitute the cereal foods. The prices of these advanced to more than double their former value[8] so that the poverty stricken were faced with starvation or emigration. It is, therefore, not surprising to find emigration to the United States increasing rapidly in these years.[9]

These disastrous conditions followed by the revolutionary upheaval of 1848, led to important agrarian and financial reforms in Prussia. The creation of "Rentenbanken" (Loan Associations), placed funds at the disposal of the lords to pay off outstanding obligations and to carry out agricultural improvements. The agrarian law of 1850 and the money made available by the Loan Associations enabled the eldest son of the German noble to terminate the old patriarchal order by purchasing the younger heirs share of the parental estate. In many cases, these as well as small peasant proprietors on the verge of economic disaster disposed of their lands and sought their fortune beyond the sea.[10]

8 von Waltershausen, op.cit., 137; The Lutheran Observer XX, (Jan. 16, 1852) 62, (Apr. 9, 1852) 689, (June 18, 1852) 73, (July 19, 1852) 750.
9 Edward Young, Chief of Bureau of Statistics, Special Report on Immigration, (Washington 1872), ppXXII-XXVIII.
10 Lamprecht, op.cit., I, 389, 397.

Between 1850 and 1865 Prussian lords acquired 12,706 large estates and 1,014,341 small peasant holdings.[11]

Had it not been for the increase in fluid capital in the banks of Germany emigration to the United States could not have mounted from 57,561 in 1846 to 215,009 in 1854.[12] The discovery of gold in California and Australia, of silver in Mexico, and the money brought from hiding after the panic of the Revolution of 1848 had subsided, all enhanced the financial reserve of the German banks. In the Prussian banks private deposits doubled between January and August, 1851, and the gold and silver reserves in these banks increased by more than one hundred percent in the ten months between January 1, and November 1, 1851.[13]

Besides having to face serious economic conditions the orthodox Lutherans in several of the German states found their religious rights menaced by the action of their princes. To counteract the ultramontane influence of the Catholic church the rulers of Prussia, Baden, Nassau, Bavaria, and the Rhenish

11 Lamprecht, op.cit., I, 393, 396-397; United States Consular Report XXXVI, 381; von Waltershausen, op.cit., 137.
12 Young, op.cit., pp. XIII-XVIII.
13 von Waltershausen, op.cit., 137; Sombart, op.cit., 89-90; Lamprecht, op.cit., I, 393.

Palatinate proposed a union of all Protestant denominations into a single state church. The papal return to Rome from exile after the overthrow of Napoleon, the restoration of the Jesuit order, and the general religious reaction in Europe all aroused the apprehension of the German rulers lest the Catholic church again rise to a position of political and spiritual preponderance. The staunch or "Old Lutherans" would under no circumstances recognize a Protestant union against Catholicism which called for compromise in doctrine and ritual. In fact, the forcible consolidation proposed by the king of Prussia from 1830-1841, merely fixed more firmly the confessional cleavage.[14] Pastors, who had been imprisoned and deprived of their office, and theological graduates, with no hope of an appointment in Germany, organized Lutheran groups who found freedom of worship in the United States.[15]

One of these organized bands was led by the Reverend Johannes A. A. Grabau. At times he had been imprisoned by the Prussian government for opposing a Protestant church union. In 1839 he traveled throughout Prussia and

14 Lamprecht, op. cit., II; 14-19, 47; Reinhold Seeberg, Die Kirche Deutschlands im neunzehnten Jahrhundert (Leipzig 1904), 73; Theobald Ziegler, Die Geistigen und Sozialen Strömungen Deutschlands, 210, 211.

15 The Lutheran Observer, VII: (Nov. 8, 1839); Johann Deinzer, Wilhelm Löhes Leben (Neudettelsau 1873), III: 77.

Pomerania, regions in which economic conditions were particularly depressing and religious discontent was strong, inducing fellow Lutherans to accept his spiritual leadership and emigrate with him. Fourteen years later he and Captain von Rohr, both agents of the state of Wisconsin, returned to Germany and prevailed on three thousand Pomeranian Lutherans to seek new homes in America.[16] By 1853 Grabau's religious appeal was strengthened by a promise of better economic opportunities in Wisconsin. For by that time the serious revolutionary disturbances in Germany of the past decade had forced the state to compromise with the religious dissenters in return for their support against possible political and social upheavals.

Only a few months before the Prussians led by Grabau landed in New York, a band of Saxon Lutherans, who intended to found a colony in Missouri, landed in New Orleans With their pastor, Martin Stephan, they settled in St. Louis and Perry County, Missouri. Associated with these were a number of theological students who later played an important role in the organization of the so-called Missouri Lutheran Synod, destined to be a bulwark of orthodox Lutheranism and

16 Kate A. Everest, "How Wisconsin came by her large German element" in Wisconsin Historical Collections, XII: 325; The Lutheran Observer, VII(Nov. 8, 1839); H. C. Campbell Wisconsin in Three Centuries, 1634-1905 (New York 1906) III: 47-48.

a church body second only to the Catholic church in organization and unity of purpose.[17]

These "Old Lutherans" had little in common with the political refugees who came to America in increasing numbers from southeastern and Reinland Germany between 1830 and 1850. The leadership among Germans in America asserted by the political refugees was particularly distressing to the "Old Lutherans", and their rationalistic utterances through the German-American press brought caustic protests from the Lutheran leaders. In the United States, in particular, where the German liberal could write and speak without restraint, the antagonism between these discordant elements was intensified.[18] Lack of governmental supervision in church affairs in the United States made the Lutherans more alert and hostile to the forces that endangered religious formalism.

A characteristic of this period was the organization of colonization societies in Germany. Those of a purely political nature wanted to organize a new Germany in the Mississippi Valley. One of the most interesting of these

17 Deinzer, op.cit., III: 77; Martin Gunther, C. F. W. Walther's Lebensbild (St. Louis, 1890), 35-37; Der Lutheraner VIII (May 26, 1852),156.

18 Bruncken, op.cit., 1-14, 28, 33, 42;Albert Bernhardt Faust, The German Element in the United States (New York 1927) II: 428.

was the "Giessener Auswanderungs-Gesellschaft", organized by a number of university men at Giessen in the Grand-Duchy of Hessen. They hoped to found in America a new free Germany where they and persons of similar convictions could escape the intolerable political conditions of Germany.[19] Another such enterprise was promoted in 1845, by thirty German princes to counteract the rapid increase in population and for a similar purpose the German Association for Emigration was organized with a capital stock of $3,000,000. In the generation following the Congress of Vienna the population of the old German Empire increased 38.7 per cent. In the East, Lutheran Germany, the increase was 47 percent between 1819 and 1845.[20]

The German immigrant invasion continued from year to year with ever increasing intensity until the number of immigrants reached almost a quarter million by 1854. The favorable reports sent back to Germany by immigrants, as well as the competition of the Northwestern States for German settlers, greatly stimulated emigration. Often the "American letters" and "immigrant guides" turned doubt into a resolve.

19 The Lutheran Observer, XIII (Oct. 17, 1845); Faust, op.cit. I:442-445; Bruncken, op.cit., 15; The Home Missionary XV (July 1842), 55.

20 Lamprecht, op.cit., I:386; United States Consular Report XX (1880), 60; Emigration and Immigration, Report of Consular office of the United States, (1885), 100; von Waltershausen, op.cit., 35; The Lutheran Observer XII (Apr. 25, 1845), 63.

After a colony had once been established and frontier conditions had been overcome, it was an easy matter for the new settlers to persuade their own countrymen to join them. The Bavarian settlements in Michigan; of Frankenmuth, Frankentrost, Frankenhilf, and Saginaw, afforded an excellent example of the latter tendencies. At the very time when the economic, political and religious distress was at its height in Germany, the Northwest served as an excellent place of refuge. After its admission to statehood in 1848, Wisconsin was unusually active in attracting immigrants from Northern Germany.[21]

This movement is graphically described in the Lutheran Observer, July 8, 1842: "Whole villages, including the rich as well as the poor, are immigrating, says a letter from Germany. Three of those in upper Hesse have within the last few months, been entirely abandoned, and several in Rhenish Prussia are preparing to follow the example. A short time ago the whole population of one of these villages passed through Metz on the way to America, accompanied by its pastor and its school master".

21 Everest, op.cit., 299-334; Der Lutheraner VIII (May 26, 1852); The Lutheran Observer XV (Dec. 31, 1847), 72; Bruncken, op.cit., 16; Faust, op.cit., I:441, 473-379; Arthur Meier Schlesinger, New Viewpoints in American History, 9; George M. Stephenson, A History of American Immigration (Boston 1926), 49.

The migration from Germany to America in the second and third quarter of the nineteenth century produced problems which taxed to the utmost the political and social structure of the United States. It was impossible for America to escape the cultural influences whereby the German people had been completely transformed in the first half of the nineteenth century. The strong national and religious convictions with which the newcomers had been imbued in Germany greatly impeded their absorption into the American fabric. For several decades the Lutheran Church in the United States was torn by doctrinal controversies which left deep scars not to be obliterated by the mellowing influence of time.

CHAPTER II

GERMANY, FROM DESPAIR AND MATERIALISM TO SPIRITUAL AND NATIONAL REGENERATION

Though this study is concerned with the conflict between conservative and liberal Lutheranism through the second and third quarter of the nineteenth century, nevertheless, a brief survey of the religious and national trends in Germany since the Treaty of Westphalia 1648, is pertinent to an understanding of the religious controversies in America throughout the century. For the roots of the bitter factiond rivalries in the Lutheran Church in America extend to the subsoil of German history. The two major movements embattled against each other were the logical outgrowth of fundamentally different cultural trends in Germany transplanted to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. For quite obvious reasons the Lutheran immigrants of the eighteenth century were more readily Americanized than those who came in the nineteenth century after the Wars of Liberation in Europe.

For the German immigrant of the eighteenth century no ray of hope seemed to rise above the historical horizon of his home land. He left a Germany which had lapsed into a state of complete political and spiritual bankruptcy. The ravages of the Thirty Years War had left Germany a complete wreck. From one half to two thirds of the population had been wiped out, and the country was given an economic setback from which it was unable to recover for about a century. Germany, divided into numerous petty and weak states, was shorn of the last vestige of a national spirit by the powers that dictated the terms at the Congress of Westphalia. And before the western part of Germany, particularly the Palatinate and Würtenberg, had recovered from the horrors of the Thirty Years War, they were laid bare by the depredations of Louis XIV, of France. At the same time the people of Germany were exploited and subjected to the denominational caprice of their incompetent princes. Especially in the Palatinate the Protestants were persecuted by their Catholic rulers.[1] All hope for relief in the "Germanies" seemed out of the question; the martial spirit awakened by Luther's great battle song

1 Wilhelm Scherer und Oskar Walzel, Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur (Berlin, 1928), 254; Kuno Francke, A History of German Literature as Determined by Social Forces (New York, 1907), 172; Oliver Perry Chitwood, A History of Colonial America (New York, 1931), 349-351.

had faded, leaving the New World as the only ray of hope in his life. Many of those who remained at home found comfort in the spiritual lyrics of the poet Paul Gerhard.[2]

From a Germany lacking national consciousness and an enlightened public will came the Lutherans who settled in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century. Northern Pennsylvania, most accessible to the outside world, was the region from which the German settlers filtered southward into the Old West, western Maryland, the Valley of Virginia, and the Carolina Piedmont.[3] Nothing seemed to bind the newcomers to their homeland, for they had left behind them only misery and religious persecution. Transplanted to a New World of hope, they were quite readily absorbed and became a part of the warp and woof of the colonial fabric of America.

Intellectually and spiritually Germany was no less a wreckage than economically and politically. Theology alone seemed to show some vitality, but even this took the form of sterile dogmatism. A passion for purity of doctrine degenerated into a kind of Medieval Scholasticism, an idle discussion of words and an attempt to distinguish between orthodoxy and heresy. Catholic and Protestant Churches alike

2 Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 254.
3 Chitwood, op.cit., 349-355; H. L. Osgood, American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century, (New York, 1904-1907) II:507.

had become lifeless bodies without any incentive toward raising the moral standard of the German people who had degenerated to a state of coarse barbarism born out of most degrading war conditions.[4]

In spite of the general trend toward barren orthodoxy the forces and ideals of real spirituality were kept alive by a small but devout band of Christian leaders throughout Europe. In Germany the writings of Johann Arndt, "True Christianity" did much to energize Christian life. This revolt against the dead religious formalism of the seventeenth century, called Pietism, produced a complete reaction against the Lutheran confessions and dogmatic dissension, and laid the foundation for a spirit of religious toleration which ultimately gave way to the rationalism of the eighteenth century.[5] In the days when Jakob Spener and August Hermann Francke were laying the foundation for Pietism in Germany, the Jansonists protested against the exclusiveness of the Jesuits. In England John Wesley sought to quicken spiritual life within the Anglican Church, and George Fox and the Quakers preached

4 Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 257; Francke, op.cit., 174-175
5 Francke, op.cit., 174-175; Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 257; W. J. Mann, Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia, 1857), 1[illegible] 106; Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (Leipzig, 1893), XXV:1[illegible]

the doctrine that Christianity is a purely spiritual or "inner light".[6]

From Halle radiated the influence of Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705) and August Hermann Francke (1663-1727). In the capacity of court preacher at Leipzig, in Saxony, Spener aroused his congregation to a life of greater piety. His sermons, however, ran counter to the scholasticism of the faculty of theology at the university and created such opposition that he and his followers found themselves constrained to withdraw to Halle. At Hall e a new university was founded in protest against the ultra conservatism of Leipzig. Here, with Spener as professor of theology, the pietistic movement that was so profoundly to effect the life of the Lutheran church in America was given free reign.[7]

The close personal friendship between Francke, founder of the orphanage at Halle, and Spener began at Dresden in 1689. From Dresden, Francke followed Spener to Leipzig and thence to Halle. Here the former received the appointment of professor of oriental languages, and in 1695 he launched an experiment that made Halle famous, the founding of an orphanage. From rather humble beginnings of teaching the rudiments of christian education in his own home to a small group of orphans the movement grew so rapidly,

6 Francke, op.cit. 175; Carlton J. H. Hayes, A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe (New York, 1932) I: 512-517.

7 Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie XXV:103-115; Mann, op.cit., 104-107.

that within a few years the orphanage with its numerous buildings took on the form of a small city. Throughout his years of activity at Halle his interest in the religious education of the youth of Germany and in missionary endeavor made a lasting impression upon his students.[8] Efforts were made to educate young men for the ministry, Bible societies were founded, orphan homes were established and missionaries were sent to foreign countries.[9]

Though neither of the two Halle pietists rejected the Lutheran confessions and symbols, they, nevertheless, emphasized those doctrines of the church that helped to quicken a life of piety. For Spener the Lutheran Church was always the true visible church, and when he was accused of departing from the confessions he was ever ready to assert his loyalty to them.[10] In his theological treatise he stated quite clearly his loyalty to the symbols by asserting: "The assurance of their truth we accept not from our regard for their composer, or from the acceptance even of our church, but because we have found them to be in harmony with the divine Word".[11]

8 Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie VII:219-231.
9 Mann, op.cit., 107.
10 Henry Eyster Jacobs, A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Vol. IV of the American Church History Series, (Fifth Edition, 1907), 133-134, 137-140; Mann, op.cit., 105.
11 Quoted in Jacobs, op.cit., 135.

Foremost in this movement was Paul Gerhardt (1606-1676), the greatest lyric poet of the church since Luther. He injected into his songs a spiritual fervor born of pietism. His songs breathe an atmosphere of contentment and a resignation to God's will. Many have become spiritual folk songs and have been a source of comfort to the German people for more than two centuries. While the hymns of Luther were real battle songs brought forth in violent religious struggles, Gerhardt's were the expression of individual souls seeking comfort and contentment in a cruel and battle-scarred world. In his hymns he so portrays the life of Christ as to bring comfort to the spiritually depressed and despairing mortals.[12] Unlike the martial spirit which pervades the songs of the Reformation, Gerhardt's hymns breathe a spirit of religious peace.[13]

It was out of this atmosphere of pietism and religious toleration that the German immigrant came to Colonial America. The absence of a rigid adherence to the Augsburg Confession and the scholastic type of orthodoxy of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the part of the eighteenth century Lutherans made them more

12 A few of Gerhardt's songs: "O Jesus Christ dein Kripplein ist O mein Paradies"; "Ein Lämmlein geht und trägt die Schuld"; "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden"; "Auf mein Herz mit Freuden"; "O du allersüsste Freude".

13 Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 262; Francke, op.cit., 188-191

adaptable to a spirit of fellowship, so essential in a frontier community. Without the traditions of national loyalty and the bond of denominational contact with their mother church the Lutherans of Colonial America easily became the prey of sectarian propagandists. Through the efforts of Henry Melchior Mühlenberg, who arrived at Philadelphia from Halle, in 1742, the scattered Lutherans of America were saved from disintegration and were organized into a separate Lutheran body.[14]

In time pietism lapsed into a disregard, even into contempt, for the confessions of the Lutheran Church. Within the German universities, including Halle, scepticism displaced the fundamentals of revealed religion. The development of natural science and natural philosophy, which reached its height in the eighteenth century, led to a search after a "natural religion" or rather no religion at all. Biblical criticism strengthened scepticism, and historical criticism did much to relegate the Bible stories into the category of mythology.[15] A majority of the preachers endeavored to satisfy the spiritual cravings of their hearers with shallow rationalistic discourses on morality. Even as late as the second decade of the nineteenth century, when a decided

14 A later chapter will treat more in detail the history of the American Lutheran Church.

15 For an excellent brief account of the intellectual revolution see Hayes, Carlton J. H., Op.cit., I:496-576.

reaction had set in against the materialism of the clergy, a vast majority of the preachers were out and out rationalists.[16]

Rationalism, generally accepted by the intellectuals and the burgher class, had no particular appeal to the "Junker" and the peasantry of Germany. They still adhered to the orthodoxy and confessionalism of the sixteenth century. Spiritual nourishment was found in the religious literature of their fathers, in the Bible, in Luther's postils, in prayer books and hymnals, rather than in the moralizing discourses of their pastors. The common people either failed to understand their pastors or thought them entirely lacking in an understanding of spiritual matters. A peasant woman very aptly expressed this sentiment by remarking:[17] "Es plaudert sich ja soveit ganz gut mit dem Pastor, nur nicht über Religion, denn das versteit he necht". (It is quite agreeable to converse with the pastor, only not about religion for this he does not understand).[18]

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth the German people experienced a national and spiritual rejuvenation that surpassed in importance any previous period in German history. In these years a decided reaction against the bonds of classicism and rationalism

17 Ziegler, op.cit., 17; Seeberg, op.cit., 21,22.
18 Seeberg, op.cit., 22.

of the "Age of Enlightenment" set in. New emphasis was placed on esthetic and moral values; the pietism of a Spener and Francke, which had almost succumbed to rationalism, took on new life. In cooperation with the new movements called romanticism, it battered down rationalistic influences and tended more decidedly toward confessionalism. The past history of Germany was extolled, and the German people were aroused to the need of concerted action to realize their national destiny. After 1806, the years of Germany's greatest humiliation, national and spiritual forces were welded together in the titanic struggle against French intellectual and political bondage.[19]

Johannes Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) was the chief exponent of romanticism in Germany. Though essentially an individualist, a defender of nature and freedom, he, nevertheless, conceived of the individual as an integral part of the larger national union. "All the great achievements of civilization, language, religion, law, custom, poetry, art, he considered the natural products of collective human life, the necessary outgrowth of national instincts and conditions".[20] In his Literarfragmente he emphasized the importance of the mother tongue as the real expression of the human soul.[21]

19 Francke, op.cit., 428-429; Mann, op.cit., 106; "Theology in Germany" in Princeton Review XXV (1853):449; Seeberg, op.cit., 9, 21; Hayes, op.cit., 570-571; Carlton J. H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, (New York, 1926) 32-55.

20 Francke, op.cit., 319.

21 Francke, op.cit., 320; Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 369.

Herder said very aptly of the mother tongue: "Has a people anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought-domain, its tradition, history, religion, and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech, is to deprive it of its one eternal good ....As God tolerates all the different languages in the world, so also should a ruler not only tolerate but honor the various languages of his peoples....The best culture of a people cannot be expressed through a foreign language; it thrives on the soil of a nation most beautifully, and, I may say, it thrives only by means of the nations inherited and inheritable dialect. With language is created the heart of a people; and is it not a high concern amongst so many peoples....to plant seeds of well-being for the far future and in the way that is dearest and most appropriate to them?"[22]

More than any other man, Herder gave a direction of romanticism to every phase of intellectual endeavor in Germany.[23] He had a decisive influence upon the literary lights of his own time, Goethe (1749-1832), Schiller (1759-1805), and others; upon Schleiermacher, the theologian; upon the lyric poets, Arndt, Körner, Schneckendorf and Uhland who kindled in the common folk a passionate love for fatherland and everything associated with the past.

22 Quoted in Hayes, Essays on Nationalism, 53-54.
23 Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 366-370.

As the century progressed the revolt against enlightenment begun by Herder in 1774 took on more of a nationalistic turn in Germany. In the field of religion Schleiermacher's Discourses on Religion produced a crisis in Germany's spiritual outlook. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, (1768-1834), was the first great national and political preacher since Luther. He was one of the greatest scholars Germany has ever produced, and in the field of theology his influence was greatest. In 1806 he had the sad experience of seeing the University of Halle closed by Napoleon. Before the great catastrophe at Jena he predicted a national struggle that would have a lasting effect upon the entire religious, economic, and social structure of his country, a conflict which the mercenary armies of the princes could not face with success. Germany, he said, would rise like a giant against the "Roman Catholic Emperor". In the capacity of court preacher to the king of Prussia at Berlin, his eloquence did much to awaken a new spiritual attitude. As professor of theology at the great national University of Berlin his influence stimulated an interest in theological studies that extended beyond the confines of Germany.[24]

24 Allgemeine Deutsch Biographie XXXI: 422-456; Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 480, 485; Francke, op.cit., 429-433; Ziegler, op.cit., 187.

In his Monologues he said: "Where are the ancient dreams of the philosophers about the state? Where is the consciousness, which ought never to leave us, that we are all part of our nations thought, imagination and activity? Where is the love which we ought to cherish for the self-created large existence of ours? Where is the devotion which would rather sacrifice the narrow consciousness of personality than lose their wider collective consciousness; which would rather risk the individual life than that the fatherland should perish? So far removed is this age from even the dimmest conception of what the highest form of human life means that they think that state the best which is felt the least, that the noblest product of the human mind through which we are to develop our nature to its fullest possibilities, is considered by them a necessary evil".[25]

Probably no national figure did more to arouse and consolidate all classes of Germany in a common effort for national liberation than Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860). In the capacity of popular writer, poet, and historian, he aroused his hearers to a sense of national honor and a need of united effort. His songs with those of Körner and other patriotic poets keyed up the German people and the soldiers upon the battle front to superhuman endeavor. His folk songs breathe the spirit of Luther expressed in his

25 Quoted in Francke, op.cit., 431.

battle song of the Reformation, "Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott". In his writings he tried to do in a spiritual and national way what Scharnhorst was doing in a military way to break the bonds of foreign domination. The reforms of Stein in Prussia owe much to Arndt, and in 1812, when Stein at the court of the Tsar was striving to organize European resistance against Napoleon, Arndt's poems rendered masterful service. His numerous pamphlets "bubbled with life and fire, with faith and hope", and his best patriotic songs appeared in the years of German awakening.[26]

The War of Liberation united the romantic and pietistic tendencies of Germany against atheism. This movement had come to be regarded a real crusade, a struggle of the heavenly hosts against the world spirit (Erdgeist).[27] Sermons took on new form and moral philosophy gave way to the story of the living God. The new spiritual life found expression in "conventicles" and prayer meetings and in the singing of the stirring Reformation hymns. The lyric poems of Arndt, Koerner, and Schneckendorf aroused the very souls of the fighting forces of Germany as they were sung about the campfires and when the soldiers plunged into battle.[28]

26 Scherer und Walzel, op.cit., 504; Francke, op.cit., 437.
27 Seeberg, op.cit., 21; Ziegler, op.cit., ~~102-104,-187~~. 13.
28 Seeberg, op.cit., 53, 54; Ziegler, op.cit., 102-104, 187.

After the Congress of Vienna churchmen as well as statesmen were mortally afraid that the stability of Europe would again be endangered if French Revolutionary theories should gain popular favor. They were outspoken in their support of anti-revolutionary propaganda. To them revolution and atheism were synonymous and the principles of popular sovereignty, constitutional government, and nationality, were a menace to human society. The clergy and nobility of Germany, impoverished by the confiscation of their property, were convinced that only a restoration of the pre-revolutionary authority of the church could save civilization. Religious publications increased rapidly. These opposed rationalism and united in battering down what they regarded a destructive influence of Jacobinism still present among many theologians, political philosophers, and statesmen.[29]

In universities and urban centers, once strongholds of rationalism, small groups were organized for the study of old church doctrines. The home of a prominent Nürenberg merchant was the center from which the new religious influence radiated in Bavaria. In Erlangen, Berlin, and in various cities of Bavaria similar movements were in full swing by 1817. From the University of Erlangen, Rudelbach, Guericke, Harless, Löhe, and others spread the doctrines of Luther,

29 William Archibald Dunning, A History of Political Theories, (New York, 1920) III: 171-206; Seeberg, op.cit., 9, 65,66; Ziegler, op.cit., 33-35, 187.

Gerhard, and Bengel. The controversial articles of Hase at Jena were written to crush rationalism; and Klaus Harms of Kiel, at the tri-centennial of Luther's publication of the Ninety-five Theses revived the almost forgotten teachings of the Reformer. In a discussion at Leipzig in 1827, August Hahn insisted that all rationalists should be removed from the church. Bible, tract, and missionary societies launched a campaign of enlightenment against rationalism. In Berlin where infidelity was in the ascendency in 1814, Frederick William supported the religious revival as a bulwark against infidelity and revolution. In 1835, he built four new churches in Berlin, the one located in a densely populated section of the city was served by a most reactionary minister, Otto von-Gerlach. By 1830 rationalism was everywhere on the defensive and in 1850 religious orthodoxy was again firmly entrenched.[30]

This marked change in Germany differentiated the nineteenth-century immigrants from those of the colonial period. The former were essentially German, proud of their national heritage, and clung to their native tongue and church as a most precious asset. They thought of the fatherland as the country of Luther, Lessing, Goethe,

30 Deinzer, op.cit., I:75; Seeberg, op.cit., 55, 56; Ziegler, op.cit., 102, 187; "Theological Tendencies in Germany" in Princeton Review XXV, 446-449; The Lutheran Observer, II (Oct. 3, 1834) 2, 3; III: (Oct. 30, 1835), 38; Vergilius Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology (New York, 1927), 118.

and Schiller, of Bach, Mozart, Mendelsohn, of Kant, Fichte, Hegel. To them Germany's past history stood out in bold relief and its tradition and culture were a source of real pride. They believed with Herder, Schleiermacher, and Arndt that only through their native tongue could they fully realize their possibilities.

Those who did most to restore orthodox Lutheranism in America in the nineteenth century had come under the spell of the German national and religious regeneration. The Reverend D. F. W. Walther, founder of the Missouri Synod, his brother Otto Hermann, I. F. Dünger, Theodore Brohm, O. Fürbringer, all later active workers in the Missouri Synod, had banded together at the University of Leipzig for religious study.[31] With reference to this group Henry Eyster Jacobs wrote: "At the University of Leipzig Walther became one of a band of students who repeated over again the experience of the students of Cambridge in the sixteenth century in their study of the Word of God, and suggests the Wesleys of the eighteenth century and the Tractarians of the nineteenth century at Oxford. They met for prayer, the reading of the scripture, and the discussion of practical religious questions. They attended also a collegium Philobiblicum held by Professor Lindner for the spiritual edification of students.

31 Gunther, op.cit., 7.

They soon became accustomed to the terms of mystics, pietists, obscurantists, hypocrites, fanatics, with which their fellow students reviled them. In the beginning they thought nothing of confessional distinctions, but as they advanced in knowledge and religious experience they could not refrain from comparing their religious convictions with the confessions of the churches and from inquiring where they belonged, whether to the Lutheran, or the Reformed, or the United Church".[32]

In the Catholic Church reaction against liberalism was more decided than in the Protestant Church. The secularisation of church property by Napoleon helped to harmonize the differences between the leading German bishops and the papacy. The German prince bishops, shorn of their secular authority, became zealous churchmen. Moreover, Pius VII's banishment from Rome by Napoleon made a martyr of the pope, and after his return on May 24, 1814, Rome was again made the scene of religious pilgrimages. Princes from all parts of Europe journeyed to Rome to do homage to the pope. Old church orders took on new life, and the regenerated Jesuit order again championed the cause of Catholic orthodoxy throughout Europe. The idealization of the Mediæval Church as an agency of world peace by the romanticists, and the bitter antagonism of non-Catholic denominations turned many prominent Protestants to the Catholic Church. In the Catholic states of Germany union of throne and

32 Jacobs, op.cit., 398-399.

altar was a reality and Protestantism was denounced as a child of revolution.[33]

In a divided Germany the rejuvenated Roman Catholic Church was able to present a united front against Protestantism.[34] To check the rising power of Roman Catholicism, the Protestant princes and their spiritual advisors proposed a union of the Reformed and the Lutheran churches. In 1817 Frederick William III of Prussia, upon the advice of Schleiermacher adopted a plan of union, hoping it would be definitely consummated by 1830. Failing in this, he resorted to forcible methods until the end of his reign in 1840. This movement, which began in Prussia, soon embraced Baden, Nassau, and the Rhenish Palatinate of Bavaria. Persons known to be extremely hostile to the Catholic Church were appointed to high church offices with the express purpose of keeping alive anti-Catholic sentiment. The antagonism so aroused formed the basis for the "Kulturkampf" of Bismarckian Germany.[35]

The time for urging such policies was rather poorly chosen. They not only intensified the deep seated antipathy between Catholic and Protestant, but emphasized the confessional differences of Lutherans and Reformed. They helped to

33 Ziegler, op.cit., 87, 208-211, 216; Lamprecht, op.cit., II, (1), 14, 19.
34 Ziegler, op.cit., 211.
35 Seeberg, op.cit., 71, 73, 77; "The Theological Tendencies in Germany" in Princeton Review XXV, 446; Der Lutheraner VII (Sep. 3, 1850), 8; Lamprecht, op.cit., II (1) 14-19, 47, 48; Ziegler, op.cit., 208-211, 216-218.

crystalize the orthodox tendencies awakened in the titanic struggle against Napoleon. Separatist Lutheran congregations were organised throughout Prussia and the opposition to royal interference in matters of religion led to the organization of a Lutheran party. The Bavarian Lutherans, who considered the maintenance of confessional Lutheranism the most effective means of opposing Catholicism in a Catholic state, supported the Prussian separatist movement. Instead of realizing his objective, Frederick William III made martyrs of about fifty thousand orthodox Lutherans.[36]

When governmental pressure against religious dissent was relaxed by Frederick William IV in 1840, the Lutherans redoubled their efforts to spread confessional views. Their periodicals brought the symbolical books to the attention of their readers and the writings of Luther into the hands of the common people. In 1841, Frederick William IV sanctioned an independent Lutheran Church organization and encouraged religious formalism as a bulwark against political liberalism. He soon received the united support of the Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic against the constitutional and democratic tendencies of the forties and once again throne and altar were united in the interest of reaction.[37]

36 Lamprecht, op.cit., II (k), 48, 49; Ziegler, op.cit., 187, 226; Seeberg, op.cit., 71; H. E. Haeobs, op.cit., 395.

37 Der Lutheraner VI (Oct. 6, 1849), 32, (May 14, 1850) 149, (July 23, 1850), 190; Lamprecht, op.cit., II (1), 48, 49; Ziegler, op.cit., 226, 227; Ferm, op.cit., 3.

In order to obtain more effective cooperation between church and state, Frederick William IV exercised a careful supervision over all temporal affairs of the church. He favored an Episcopal form of church government for Lutheran and Reformed churches with himself a kind of protector. State officials and clergymen who disapproved of his hierarchical form of organization were dismissed. Only the most conservative confessionalist could expect pastoral appointment, and office-holders and persons hoping for political preferment were compelled to affiliate with the church.[38] Pietism now allied itself with orthodoxy in battering down political and religious liberalism. The demand for confessional ministers in Germany by 1850, reduced the number of theological students who looked to America for a field of service, and the Lutheran Church of America was thrown more upon its own resources for pastors and teachers.[39]

In all parts of Germany the membership of the confessional Lutheran Church increased. In 1841, Prussia had fourteen Lutheran dioceses (Pfarrbezirke) with a total membership of 10,000, but by 1844 the number of dioceses had mounted to sixteen and the church membership to 16,000. In 1850 the total membership of the thirty-five dioceses was 70,000. Similar increases were evident in Nassau, Saxony and other

38 Ziegler, op.cit., 226, 290-293, 299.
39 Der Lutheraner VII (July 22, 1851), 190, VIII, (Mar. 2, 1852), 108; F. Fürbringer, Briefe von C. W. F. Walther, (St. Louis, 1915), I:79.

parts of Germany.[40] To be geminely orthodox was almost a mania.[41] The words of the Lutheran Observer, an ultra liberal American periodical in favor of "new measures" and strongly anti-symbolical, in criticism of the exclusiveness of the "Old Lutherans" of America might well have been applied to the religious trend in Germany. It quoted them as saying: "We cannot call the Reformed Church even a part of the church of Christ, for they lack the marks of the Christian church, the purity of the sacraments and unity of doctrine; neither can we call them a sister church for the church of Christ cannot have a sister. The Lutheran church is the only true church of our times, she alone has the pure sacraments and a unity of doctrine".[42]

The intimate cooperation between throne and altar in the interest of political reaction awakened in the liberals of Germany a spirit of hostility toward matters spiritual. They, and later the Social Democrats, could not but regard religion and reaction as one and the same.

The return of some of the revolutionary leaders of 1848 to the fold of the church intensified the antipathy between the political liberal and the religious fundamentalist.[43]

40 Der Lutheraner VI, (Jan. 8, 1850), 65, VII, (Sep. 3, 1850) 8; Schaff-Herzog, Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 82.
41 Fürbringer, op.cit., 1:79.
42 Lutheran Observer I (Apr. 18, 1845), 63.
43 Ziegler, op.cit., 290-293.

This antagonism has persisted in America to the present time in spite of the separation of church and state. Ernest Bruncken said in 1904: "This division pervades to a greater or less extent all relations of life, from ordinary business affairs to party politics on the one hand, and social gatherings on the other. It is as noticeable today as fifty years ago, and persists to a considerable extent even among the second and third generation of Germans in America".[44]

A return to a literal interpretation of the Bible and to a rigid application of the Lutheran doctrines set forth in creeds, confessions, and symbols inevitably led to an attack upon the "Fortyeighters" in Germany and America. Any rupture with constituted political authority was as severely censured by the orthodox Lutherans of America as were the Anabaptists and the rebellious peasants by Luther. The doctrines of the Lutheran Church enjoin upon all Christians a submission to any form of civil government so long as government does not interfere in matters of conscience.[45]

The religious and political differences moulded into the very life of the people of Germany did not disappear when they came to America. The more intellectual

44 "German Political Refugees in the United States during the period from 1815-1860", in Deutsch Amerikanische Geschichtsblatter, 1904, 3.

45 Johann Conrad Dietrich, Dr. Martin Luther's Kleiner Katechismus in Fragen und Antworten (St. Louis, 1895), 24, 62-64.

immigrants influenced by the political philosophy of Kant, Fichte, von Humbolt, Hegel and others of the German idealists, could hardly be expected to cooperate with the immigrants steeped in religious conservatism and living in an entirely different realm of thought. On the other hand, the deep seated religious consciousness and exclusiveness which had developed in Germany lost none of its violence, but rather increased in intensity in America, a country in which religious opinions had free sway. The Lutheran immigrant of the nineteenth century was likewise out of sympathy with the liberal, anti-symbolical "new measures" of the American Lutheran Church made up, in the main, of the descendants of Lutherans that settled in America in the colonial period.

CHAPTER III

EARLY AMERICAN LUTHERANISM TO 1850

The religious trends in America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were analogous to those in Germany during the same period. A disregard for doctrinal differences, church symbols and the Augsburg Confession had developed in the Lutheran Church planted during the colonial period, and a real desire was discernible of adapting the church to its new national environment. It should be borne in mind, however, that the American pastors never went to the same rationalistic extremes as the German.[1]

Before the arrival of Henry Melchioer Mühlenberg at Philadelphia in 1742, the Lutherans of colonial America had given little thought to church symbols. Geographical isolation, a lack of well trained pastors, German indifference toward religious endeavor in America, all opened the way for proselyters in Lutheran communities. Only the timely appearance of Mühlenberg in response to an urgent appeal to the Halle authorities saved Lutheranism in America.[2]

1 Ferm, op.cit., 18, 40; Jacobs, op.cit., 313, 314.
2 Jacobs, op.cit., 209, 210; Ferm, op.cit., 4.

Mühlenberg, (1711-1787), was a true disciple of the Lutheranism which pervaded Halle. He was educated at Göttingen and Halle. Before sailing for America he visited the chaplain of George II of England, Dr. Ziegenhagen. He was admirably fitted to assume charge of the large missionary field extending from New York to Georgia. He had a fluent command of high and low German and of the English languages, was of conciliatory temperament and an excellent preacher. His work as organizer and builder was so successful that he may well be regarded the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America.[3]

The first six years of his ministry was spent in visiting Lutheran communities, planting churches, settling factional controversies, and bringing the various Lutheran settlements into closer touch with each other and the mother church in Germany. To him must be attributed the awakening of a new confessional consciousness in America. The financial contributions from Germany he applied toward building churches. His labors were so successful that in 1748 he was able to unite twenty congregations into the first synodical body of America, today called the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.[4] Called to serve three congregations in 1742,

3 Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie XXII, 460-461; Mann, op.cit., 111; Vergilius Ferm, What is Lutheranism (New York, 1930), 2.

4 Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie XXII, 360; Jacobs, op.cit., 219-236; Abdel Ross Wentz, The Lutheran Church in American History, (Philadelphia, 1925), 58-61; Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 4.

Mühlenberg was proud to report seventy in Pennsylvania and adjacent provinces in 1771, and thirty additional congregations in other parts of the country. At the time of his death in 1787, his activity had carried him into New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia.[5]

From the first the newly launched synod was confronted with the ever present need of ministers. Pastors already taxed to the limit were called upon to look after the spiritual needs of a growing Lutheran population. It may justly be assumed that the Lutheran immigration into Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas increased in much the same proportion as the German population. This population in Pennsylvania alone exceeded fifty thousand in 1766, of whom more than thirty thousand were Lutherans. On the basis of the total white population of more than three hundred thousand at the time of the American Revolution it is reasonable to assume that more than sixty thousand of these were Lutherans.[6] To meet the spiritual needs of this growing Lutheran population urgent but almost fruitless appeals for pastors and financial aid were sent to Halle in Germany. In fact, the seriousness of the situation

5 Jacobs, op.cit., 295-301; Wentz, op.cit., 68.
6 Henry Cabot Lodge, A Short History of the English Colonies in America, (New York, 1881), ; Schaff-Herzog, Religious Encyclopedia VII:85; Osgood, op.cit., 407, 408;

was such that many proposed the transfer of this religious responsibility to the Anglican Church, an act that would, without doubt, have been welcomed in London. Since the Reformation the relationship between the two denominations had been rather friendly and such an arrangement would have increased the prestige of the none too strong Episcopalian Church in Pennsylvania.[7]

Loyal to the influence of Spener and Francke, Mühlenberg did not break with the confessions and symbols of the Lutheran Church. This loyalty, however, took a pietistic turn which stressed Christian life and spiritual friendship with all Protestant denominations. For the Church of England Mühlenberg had a high regard and declared its articles of faith the Word of God, and their explanation good evangelical Lutheran doctrine. He broke with the formalism and orthodoxy of the sixteenth century and emphasized the doctrines that promoted practical piety.[8]

After the death of the "patriarch" in 1787, a general leveling process followed among the religious leaders in America. The rationalistic influence which had crept into Halle found its way to this country. Many of the supposedly Lutheran ministers seemed to know nothing of the Halle leaders, or of Mühlenberg.[9] A disregard for confessional differences

7 Jacobs, op.cit., 245-249; Wentz, op.cit., 61-63, 66, 67.
8 Ferm, The Crisis of American Lutheran Theology, 5, 6, 14.
9 Jacobs, op.cit., 133, 134; Mann, op.cit., 111.

and emphasis upon matters of agreement encouraged open fellowship with other denominations. The introduction of the word "German" into the official name of the synod in the last decade of the eighteenth century facilitated a union with the Reformed Church. "Open fraternity was realized in union churches, in the circulation among the Reformed and Moravian brethren of the Evanglisches Magazin established by the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1811, in cooperative efforts in educational work, and in the use of a common German hymn book".[10]

The revised constitution of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania adopted in 1792, omitted all confessional tests and all reference to Lutheran symbols. Dr. Kunze, Mühlenberg's son-in-law, favored even greater concessions to liberalism when he framed the constitution for the Ministerium of New York, than had the mother synod of Pennsylvania.[11] As long as he stood at the helm of the New York Synod, the injection of crass rationalism was checked. But after his death in 1807, its new president, Dr. F. H. Quitman, a graduate of Halle at a time when scepticism was rampant there and a Doctor of Divinity of Harvard, surrendered the Ministerium to rationalism.[12] According to Ferm, he "was frankly an exponent in the American Lutheran Church of the movement known historically as 'rationalism'. His Evangelical

10 Jacobs, op.cit., 22.
11 Jacobs, op.cit., 310-314; Wentz, op.cit., 69, 95-97.
12 Wentz, op.cit., 96.

Catechism, 'published with consent and approbation of the Synod' in 1814, has no relation with the historic catechism of Luther but is an entirely new departure, both as to form and in doctrinal content.... Inherited doctrines which seem irrational are dropped in favor of new interpretations".[13] The leveling process in confessional matters was promoted by Lutheran divinity students having to attend Harvard, Yale, or Princeton if they wanted to complete their theological education in America. It was not until the year 1826 that Gettysburg Seminary, the first Lutheran theological school, was opened.[14]

In the half-century following the Declaration of Independence, disintegration of the Lutheran Church seemed imminent. Frontier conditions, war, and isolation from Germany, all hastened the process of Americanization. Resistance of many older church members to the use of the English language in divine service, the intermarriage of the German-American youth with the English and Scotch-Irish, made for a loss in Lutheran church membership.[15] Migration from Pennsylvania into the West, central Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, from North Carolina into Tennessee, and thence with the Virginians

13 The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 25.
14 Jacobs, op.cit., 295-319; Wentz, op.cit., 97-99.
15 H. H. Maurer, "The Problem of Group Consciousness" in American Journal of Sociology XXX, (May 1925), 537, 539, 671.

into Kentucky, southern Ohio and Illinois, hastened the absorption of the Lutheran element into the better organized Presbyterian, Episcopalian, andMethodist denominations.[16]

To counteract the dangers threatening in America a sincere attempt was made to perpetuate Lutheranism by uniting the discordant elements into a general synodical body. Such a movement was initiated by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1818 in a proposal, that the "several Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the United States of America" appoint deputies to form a constitution for a General Synod. In response to this call an organizing convention made up of delegates from the synods of Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia, met at Hagerstown, Maryland, on October 22, 1820. The first regular meeting of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States was held at Frederick, Maryland, in October of the following year. By 1860 it could boast a communicant membership of 164,000, fully two thirds of the Lutherans in America.[17]

It was not a deliberative body but rather a union of district synods into a loose federation. While bearing the name "Lutheran" it hoped to bring other Protestant denominations into fellowship with it. This plan of organization was wither a reflection of the proposed union of the

16 Faust, op.cit., I:434, 435; Jacobs, op.cit., 351; Ferm, op.cit., The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 35, 36; Wentz, op.cit., 104, 107, 108.

17 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 37; Jacobs, op.cit., 357; Stephenson, op.cit., 21; Wentz, op.cit., 108-109, 182.

Prussian Lutheran and Reformed churches, or it was the result of a desire to make the transition from Methodism, Presbyterianism, and Episcopalianism back into the Lutheran fold less difficult. Back of the plan seemed to be more the idea of an "Evangelical Alliance".[18] The General Synod welcomed any movement which looked toward "concord and unity" of all Christians regardless of denomination. For the very Ministerium that initiated the movement for a synodical organization appointed a committee to confer with the Evangelical Reformed Synod to "Devise ways and means for founding a joint institution of learning, in order to train young men for the ministry".[19] At the Baltimore convention in 1845, it was voted to approve the practice "which has hitherto prevailed in our churches, and those of the Presbyterian Church of mutually inviting the ministry to act as advisory members in each body; of inviting communicants in regular standing in either church to partake of the Lord's Supper in the other; and of dismission of church members at their own request from the churches of the one to those of the other denomination".[20]

18 J. L. Neve, A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America, (Burlington, 1916), 114.
19 The Evangelical Review V, (Oct. 1853), 243, 268; Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 42, 63, 94.
20 Stephenson, op.cit., 21; The Evangelical Review V, (Oct. 1853), 267.

The General Synod acted in a purely advisory capacity and its decisions had no binding force on the district synods. It "has no power to call to account the members of individual synods for any offense in doctrine or practice.... In short, the several synods constituting the General Synod are so many independent ecclesiastical polities, associated merely for the purpose of promoting brotherly love, and of concentrating their energies in effecting such objects as are of general interest and such as one synod alone could not accomplish".[21] To it was intrusted the supervision of the Gettysburg Seminary founded in 1826, home and foreign missions, and to provide books to be used in divine services. It might recommend to the respective district synods a catechism, form of liturgy and other confessional books, but the final decision was with the individual synod.[22]

A positive stand in confessional matters and formal church service was precluded by its broad purpose and the wide differences in doctrine and practice of the district synods. In the constitution no mention was made of any of the Lutheran confessions, but it contained the general statement "that every individual is bound to receive the Old and New Testament as the

21 Minutes and Proceedings of the General Synod 1819-1859, I:15.
22 Mann, op.cit., 35, 36; Stephenson, op.cit., 21; The Evangelical Review V, (Oct. 1853), 246.

infalible rule of faith and practice to be governed by it".[23] The break with the old Lutheran Church of Germany was complete. On all sides the influence of Puritanism was apparent. Emphasis was upon works, external conduct and the performance of certain religious duties called "new measures", like Sabbath observance, abstaining from alcoholic drinks, revivals and the like. The sacraments and dogma of the church were considered non-essential, and "every one was left at liberty to adopt concerning them what opinion might seem to him most satisfactory".[24] The Puritan influence of America had gone so far that in most of the Lutheran churches the old form of service that had set them apart from the Reformed Church had disappeared. The ministerial gown had given way to the plain black coat, no longer were seen altar, crucifix, baptismal font, and paintings, and in many instances the church bells and steeples had disappeared as relics of Romanism. Lutheran liturgy, prayers, congregational singing, and a study of the catechism were no longer of importance.[25]

The synod as constituted contained within itself the elements of discord and disintegration. Many of the

23 Ferm, The Crisis of American Lutheran Theology, 39; Mann, op. cit., 19, 20.

24 Jacobs, op.cit., 384; Mann, op.cit., 19, 31; Neve, op.cit., 113; The Lutheran Observer III, (Feb. 19, 1836), 103; X (Apr. 10, May 26, June 16, June 30, Aug. 11, 1843), XV (Dec. 17, 1847); Helmuth Trepte, Deutschtum in Ohio bis zum Jahre 1820, (Leipzig, 1931) 182-183.

25 Mann, op.cit., 26.

moderates refused to compromise in matters concerning distinctively Lutheran confessions and symbols. Some of the isolated western communities were shocked by the renunciation of fundamental doctrines and congregations in Ohio complained that their pastors were no longer faithful to the teachings of the Reformer. The extreme right, representing to a considerable extent the new immigrants, could see nothing that savored of Lutheranism in the "American Lutherans" save possibly the name.

One of the first in the East to raise a vigorous protest against the non-confessional trends of the "American Lutherans" was the Reverend Paul Henkel, a native of North Carolina. His first pastoral charge was in Philadelphia as a member of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. In 1806, in the capacity of itinerant missionary he traveled through Virginia and into Ohio, organizing the synods of North Carolina and of Ohio and adjacent states. When in 1820, the Synod of North Carolina joined the General Synod, Henkel, who had been at odds with the former body over personal and doctrinal matters, withdrew in opposition to the confessional laxness of the General Synod, and organized the Tennessee Synod on a strong symbolical foundation. From his headquarters at New Market, Virginia, he and his four sons kept alive and spread through their own press a knowledge of the Lutheran confessions and symbols. They were unsparing in their attack against the liberalism of the General

Synod and the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.[26]

The Ministerium, too liberal for a Henkel, was too conservative to long continue with the General Synod. The German element still loyal to their native language and literature were able to force the Ministerium to withdraw from the General Synod at its second convention in 1823. Not until thirty years later when the tide of confessionalism had shown a decided upward swing in the General Synod, did the Ministerium again cast its lot with that body, and then it was with the express purpose of strengthening that movement.[27] When it returned to the fold it expressed the hope "that the friends and defenders of the old confessions are increasing in the General Synod, and that their body together with the whole church, will become more and more in spirit and character what it is in name, Lutheran".[28] It should also be noted, that at this time the conservatives were strengthened by the admission

26 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 64-70; Jacobs, op.cit., 393; Trepte, op.cit., 182-183; Edmund Jacob Wolf, The Lutherans in America (New York, 1889), 373.

27 The Evangelical Review V (Oct. 1853) 245, 275; Jacobs, op. cit., 371; Mann, op.cit., 88, 92; Schaff Herzog, New Religious Encyclopedia VII; 87; Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 43, 146.

28 Quoted in Mann, op.cit., 89.

of the Synods of Pittsburgh, Texas, and Northern Illinois,[29] and other groups like the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Wisconsin Synod and Swedish and Norwegian Lutherans tried to steer a middle of the road course between "American" and "Old Lutheranism".[30]

From year to year the voice of those within and outside of the General Synod favoring a more positive profession of Lutheranism reached a wider circle of listeners. In the forties appeared a number of important periodicals which planned to quicken the confessional spirit in the American Lutheran Church. In 1843 the Ohio Synod published the first issue of the Lutheran Standard. Five years later the Missionary, published by William A. Passavant of Pittsburgh, made its appearance and the following year Charles Porterfield Krauth and William M. Reynolds, at Gettysburg, began the publication of The Evangelical Review. Through these publications the more conservative members of the General Synod championed a return to a more adequate appreciation of the historic confessions of the church.[31]

29 Minutes and Proceedings of the General Synod 1853; The Evangelical Review V (Oct. 1853), 275; Stephenson, op.cit. 28; Wentz, op.cit., 174, 175.
30 Mann, op.cit., 90-94; Ferm, op.cit., 43, 146.
31 Mann, op.cit., 100, 101; Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 143; Der Lutheraner, IV (Aug. 8, 1848), 198.

The most influential spokesman for the "Old Lutherans" of America, Der Lutheraner, edited and published by the Saxon pastor C. F. W. Walther, first appeared in September, 1844. It was relentless in its criticism of the Puritan and "Methodistic" doctrines and practices in the General Synod, at its theological seminary at Gettysburg, and appearing in its semi-official organ, the Lutheran Observer edited by Dr. Benjamin Kurtz. The voice of warning against the so-called pseudo-Lutheranism of the General Synod was heard not only in America but also in Lutheran Germany. It did much to consolidate the "Old Lutherans" of the two continents in a common endeavor to perpetuate orthodoxy in the New World. Like the Saxons the Prussian Lutherans, headed by Johannes A. A. Grabau, were equally as critical of the "American Lutherans".[32]

Professor C. Porterfield Krauth, President of Pennsylvania College, summarized the trends of Lutheranism in America in the following words: "She has passed, in some parts, through the extreme subjectivity, an extreme leaning to the emotional in religion; she permitted herself, to some extent, to be carried away by the surges of animal feeling, and lost much of her ancient propriety. She is now retracing her steps, acknowledging her error, seeking release from

32 A more comprehensive treatment of this conflict will be found in a later chapter.

crude views and objectionable measures. She is hunting amongst the records of the past for the faith of former days, and endeavoring to learn what she was in her earlier form. Church disposed to renew her connection with the past, and in her future progress to walk under the guidance of the light which it has furnished".[33]

As the tide of conservatism mounted in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the allies of the "American Lutheran"party were hard pressed to prevent the General Synod from being swept along with the movement. The liberal party of the synod was ably represented by Benjamin Kurtz, editor and publisher of the Lutheran Observer and S. S. Schmucker, professor at Gettysburg Theological Seminary. Both fought courageously to perpetuate what they believed to be a forward looking concept of "American Lutheranism". Through the columns of the Lutheran Observer Kurtz assailed rigid adherence to Lutheran symbols, the dogma concerning the sacraments, and the liturgical worship of the "Old Lutherans". Into his ceaseless attack upon the latter he injected stinging vituperation. To him, the "Old Lutherans", particularly the Saxons and the Prussians, were Puseyites, self-righteous Pharisees, sacramentarians, and Romanists. On the side of "American Lutheranism" the editor favored what he called a

33 The Evangelical Review II (July 1850), 9.

more spiritual religion as expressed in so called "new measures", revivals, prayer-meetings, sabbath observance. His unswerving stand in favor of "American Lutheranism" did not deter him from opening the columns of the Observer to both factions in the heated confessional controversy which agitated the General Synod in the later forties and the early fifties of the nineteenth century.

Intimately associated with Benjamin Kurtz was S. S. Schmucker, by all odds from the point of view of scholarship and organizing ability the most influential person of the General Synod in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. He was the son of Reverend J. G. Schmucker, president of the Pennsylvania Ministerium when that body called the first general synodical convention in 1820. The younger Schmucker was a strong believer in a progressive "American Lutheranism", a movement in harmony with the intellectual and religious trends of early nineteenth century America. By training and environment he was well qualified to direct and mold the movement that reached its height when he was in the prime of life. Through the preliminary pastoral training he received from his father and Doctor Helmuth at Philadelphia, he absorbed a spirit of religious tolerance and pietism. His collegiate education at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Princeton Theological Seminary promoted friendships with

leading clergymen of other denominations, which continued throughout his life and undoubtedly contributed toward his openmindedness and strongly rationalistic approach to the confessional disputes in the General Synod.[34]

From 1820 to 1870, Schmucker was present at every meeting of the General Synod and had an active part in all its deliberations. In 1823, when the synod's existence was threatened by the withdrawal of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, he worked indefatigably to save it from dissolution, a service that marked him at once the leader of that body. When the General Synod established its theological seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in 1826, Schmucker was appointed to the chair of theology. During the thirty-eight years of his teaching career he endeavored to mold the religious thought of more than four hundred students according to the pattern of his theological philosophy.[35] When he assumed his duties of office at Gettysburg Seminary his oath of office gave him considerable leeway in interpreting the Augsburg Confession. Instead of subscribing to the Seminary's articles of organization which declared that, "In it shall be taught in the German and

34 Ferm, op.cit., 71-72, 130-131; Jacobs, op.cit., 364-366; Mann, op.cit., 23; Wentz, op.cit., 113, 118, 119, 169-170.
35 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 72, 73, 75, 76; Jacobs, op.cit., 364; Wentz, op.cit., 120.

English languages, the fundamental doctrines of the Sacred Scriptures as contained in the Augsburg Confession",[36] he was permitted to accept it as fundamentally correct and given the privilege of exercising "the right of private judgment".[37] He demonstrated the same liberal attitude concerning the Augsburg confession when he assisted in drafting a constitution for district synods of the General Synod. In the document the only mention made of doctrinal matters was in the vow required of licensure and ordination of candidates, which asked: "Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?"[38]

The historical justification of a modified Lutheranism may be gleaned from Schmucker's address, Portraiture of Lutheranism delivered before the Synod of West Pennsylvania in 1840. In it he attempted to show that "American Lutheranism" was a logical evolutionary process from strict confessionalism of the latter part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to a progressive improvement of Lutheranism in his own time.

36 The Evangelical Review V, (Oct. 1853), 246.
37 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 80.
38 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 81; The Lutheran Observer I (July 18, 1834) 305.

In the course of his discourse he pointed out that in time the authority of the church fathers was rejected, all the symbols and confessions save the Augsburg Confession were discarded, and the entire sacramental and ritualistic systems of the Lutheran Church were purged of papal doctrines and practices.[39] He would have "American Lutheranism" regarded but a logical evolution of the patriarchal age of the church in America as organized by Mühlenberg.[40] In the debates between Schmucker and his colleague Dr. W. M. Reynolds published in the Lutheran Observer in 1849 and 1850 his confessional attitude was clerified and crystalized.

From a modified confessional position in 1840, Schmucker was ultimately forced to take a more strongly anti-symbolical and sacramental stand in the hope of checking the progress of orthodoxy in the General Synod. In his early writings he showed a desire for the Lutheran Church to return to a confessional position without destroying "that liberty of thought, that all Protestants must retain". At the same time he favored a compromise on doctrinal differences in order that Lutherans of various shadings might be able to unite into a single synodical body. The Elements of Popular Theology from his pen appeared in 1834. It was a pioneer in the field of Lutheran dogmatics in the English language. In it the

39 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 131-140.
40 Mann, op.cit., 111.

author made a strong plea for the acceptance of the "doctrine of the Christian revelation" and a departure "from the rigid requisites of extensive and detailed creeds".[41] In a similar manner in his Lutheran Manual and American Lutheranism Vindicated he taught what he contended were the elements of truth in the Augsburg Confession interspersed with a number of errors.[42] It was not until in the fifties in the midst of the acrimonious debates over creed and dogma that Schmucker openly laid down what he regarded error and truth in the Augsburg Confession.

41 The Lutheran Observer I (July 18, 1834), 305.
42 Jacobs, op.cit., 367.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPIRITUAL STATUS OF THE LUTHERANS IN THE WEST

Never in its history had Protestant Christianity been called upon for such heroic efforts as in the United States in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. The westward movement of the population of the United States coupled with the immigrant invasion into the vast and undeveloped areas of the Mississippi Valley taxed to the utmost the missionary resources of the East. Leading clergymen feared these settlers, "cut off from the religious contacts of their youth", might lapse into a state of semi-barbarism, materialism, and agnosticism. They soon came to realize how closely the future destiny of Protestantism was linked with the West.[1] Lyman Beecher, among the first to realize the significance of the West, said: "The moral destiny of our nation and all our institutions and hopes, and the worlds hopes turn to the character

1 Peter G. Mode, The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity (New York, 1923), 15-78 passim; The Lutheran Observer XII (Apr. 4, 1845) 32; Lyman Beecher, Autobiography II (New York, 1864) 224, 453, 466; The Home Missionary XVII (May 1844), 16, (April 1846), 81.

of the West, and the competition now is for that pre-occupancy in the education of the rising generation, in which the Catholics and infidels have got the start on us....The time has come in which we must unite ourselves and our forces for the West, as all we have done will be impotent to exert the controling influence of Christian Science, civilization, and holiness over the infinitude of the depraved mind here bursting forth and rolling in from abroad upon us like a flood".[2]

In the absence of governmental cooperation and of some general form of church organization for united endeavor the response of the church to this emergency was hardly short of miraculous. "With no imposing conbination of force, and no strategic concert of action, the work was done spontaneously and simultaneously, like some of the operations of nature, by a multitude of different agencies. The planting of the church in the West is one of the wonders of church history".[3]

The handicaps to missionary endeavor that faced the Lutheran Church in America greatly outweighed those of other denominations. Not only had many Lutherans of the East been seized by the lure of the West, but their number

2 Beecher, op.cit., 224, 253.
3 Leonard W. Bacon, A History of American Christianity, Vol. XIII of American Church History Series (New York, 1897), 328.

was steadily augmented by the stream of immigrants from Germany. Thousands of the latter settled in the Mississippi Valley in widely scattered communities, where they frequently displaced the American population and became, as it were, islands of Germans in a vast western sea with scarcely a contact with the outside world.[4] Others settled in urban centers of the Middle West where language, national pride, religious convictions and social customs were, for a time, as effective in maintaining aloofness from the native population as the physiographical barriers of the West.[5] The magnitude of the task will be better understood by realizing that the potential Lutheran population increased three times as rapidly as the population of the United States in the years from 1830 to 1870.[6]

Unlike other communions, the Lutheran Church has generally emphasized unity of faith rather than organization and uniformity of worship. In the states of Germany as well as the Scandinavian countries the question of church organization was a governmental problem. In general, the church's

4 The Lutheran Observer II (May 15, 1835) 149; (Aug. 7, 1835) 199; III (Dec. 4, 1835), 59; IV (Aug. 12, 1836), 203; Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V (1843), 127, 152.

5 The Lutheran Observer I (May 23, 1834) 274; III (Aug. 12, 1836) 203; VIII (Nov. 13, 1840) 3; X (Apr. 21, 1843) 126.

6 Ferm, What is Lutheranism? 3.

organization was made to conform to the particular needs of the state, thus giving rise to forms ranging from the Hierarchical Episcopalian to the democratic and congregational.[7] Professor H. E. Jacobs describes the planting of the Lutheran Church in America in the following words: "The Lutheran Church was not transplanted to America as a homogeneous and thoroughly organized body. The task before most other religious communities which have found a home here has been far less difficult....The regulations of the Roman Catholic, the Protestant Episcopal, and the Presbyterian churches were to a great extent fixed at their entrance into America. Other church organizations, having a somewhat freer development than the communions just named were nevertheless unembarrassed by the conflicting European orders to which their founders were accustomed. The Lutheran Church of America comes, however, from various nationalities. Even within the same nationality, the multiplicity of small states into which Germany was divided gave to each its own separate church constitution and particular church regulation".[8]

From its very beginning on American soil the Lutheran Church was an incoherent body. Only the untiring

7 The Lutheran Observer II (Mar. 27, 1835), 123; Jacobs, op. cit., 1-17, passim 20; Dunning, op.cit., 1-14.
8 Jacobs, op.cit., 21.

efforts of a Mühlenberg saved it from a complete collapse and gave to it a feeling of solidarity. But no sooner had Mühlenberg passed from the stage of activity than the forces of disintegration again threatened Lutheranism in America. The rapid diffusion of population into the West, the loss of membership to more highly organized and aggressive Protestant denominations led to the founding of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in the United States in 1820. At best but a loose synodical federation, it was wholly unprepared to minister to the spiritual needs of a rapidly increasing Lutheran population.

In the two decades after 1830, controversies over language, charges and counter charges of intolerance, oppression, and insincerity, coupled with the westward movement of the Lutherans gave rise to the formation of new synodical bodies.[9] The financial problems with which the church wrestled, the great lack of ministers, and the emphasis placed on foreign missions, all gravitated against successful cooperation for missionary endeavor among the immigrant Lutherans of the West.[10] Many of the eastern pastors were little concerned over their co-religionists

9 The Evangelical Review V (Oct. 1853), 245; Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 42, 325 passim; Jacobs, op.cit., 393; Stephenson, op.cit., 9, 10; Wentz, op.cit., 107, 139, 181.

10 The Evangelical Review I (July 1849), 33, 34; Jacobs, op.cit., 381; The Lutheran Observer II (Apr. 10, 1835) 127; Stephenson, op.cit., 9, 10.

of the West. Though their charges extended to four and sometimes even ten localities, they seemed to find adequate time to engage in business enterprises or farming. Close personal contact with their flock was lost, and often the entire religious service degenerated into more mechanical form, and a lack of church discipline generally prevailed.[11]

It is little wonder that such appeals as: "Will our brethren of the East listen to the Macedonian cry, come over and help us";[12] "Oh dear brother it would be heart rending to you and other friends of Lutheranism to see how the poor people of our church are misled";[13] "We want a host of pious young men to rise up in the strength of the Lord who shall feed the perishing thousands with the Bread of Life";[14] "For God's sake, take up our cause in your paper and send us a preacher if possible";[15] and many similar appeals met with little or no response.[16]

The enrollment in the three leading Lutheran theological seminaries of the American Lutheran Church was far too small to supply the pastoral vacancies in the East.

11 The Evangelical Review I, (July 1849) 27, 33; The Home Missionary XVII, (Jan. 1845), 195.
12 The Home Missionary II (Apr. 3, 1835), 126.
13 The Home Missionary II (May 8, 1835), 147.
14 The Home Missionary III (Dec. 4, 1835), 58.
16 The Home Missionary I (July 18, 1834), (Aug. 1, 1834), (Mar. 20, 1835), (Apr. 10, 1835); VIII (Nov. 13, 1840); XV (May 14, 1847); XVI (Jan. 7, 1848).
15 The Home Missionary VII (Sep. 20,1839), 3.

As late as 1849 the Evangelical Review pointed out that the three seminaries at Hartwick, Gettysburg, and Lexington, "have not in all averaged more than twenty-five theological students annually".[17]

The wide spread popular alarm over a determined effort on the part of the pope to secure spiritual primacy in the West through the efforts of the Jesuit order, a fear that aroused most Protestants to crusading activity, failed to awaken the Lutherans of the East from a state of religious apathy. The large influx of Irish and German Catholics into the United States was the basis for such apprehension. The German Catholics were either accompanied by priests, or "when they arrive in this country they are advised to settle in the cities and large towns and at a few points in the country where they have churches or intend to establish schools. Wherever Catholics are found they are seen in large numbers".[18] Free from language barriers the Catholic Church was prepared to pursue an aggressive policy from the first. It built churches, founded colleges, and established charitable institutions, all of which confirmed the Protestants in their convictions that the Jesuits might make inroads into

17 The Evangelical Review I (July 1849), 33-35; Jacobs, op. cit., 313, 314, 325, 384, 353.
18 The Lutheran Observer XII (Feb. 7, 1845)

their ranks.[19] In an appeal addressed to Dr. Albert Barns in July, 1842, for financial assistance for Lane Theological Seminary at Cincinnati, Dr. Lymann Beecher threw out the challenge that: "No human means can certainly meet and repel this invasion of Catholic Europe as a competent evangelical ministry and revivals of religion....Oh my brother, could the ministers and churches of the East see and feel the unalterable demand for ministers as I see and feel it".[20]

In a similar appeal for German assistance a Lutheran missionary, C. F. W. Wyneken pointed out the source of Catholic strength in the West. "From Europe they are receiving a large number of workers. Their churches in the cities are beautiful, and convents, seminaries and schools are being erected in the West. Well trained teachers, both male and female, from all sections of Europe are directing educational institutions and are becoming the educators of the children of the most influential".[21]

The German immigrants more than any others were

19 The Lutheran Observer I (May 23, 1834) 274; II (Jan 9, 1835) 78; III (Dec. 4, 1835) 58; XII (Feb. 7, 1845); Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V (1843) 137; Bacon, op.cit., 312; Mode, op.cit., 77, 78.

20 Beecher, op.cit., II: 453.

21 Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche (1843) 137.

in constant danger of losing their spiritual heritage. A lack of Lutheran pastors made them prey for religious impostors and vagabonds.[22] For "in the absence of faithful ministers, those Germans, always accustomed in their native land to gospel ministrations and unwilling to be deprived of them now, are liable to be imposed upon by every expelled student or banished demagogue who flies to this country to escape disgrace or legal penalties of the law he has violated in Germany. In this way German Churches of America have been brought into disrepute and become the by-word of reproach among their observant neighbors".[23]

Disgraceful conditions were brought to Wyneken's attention on his missionary trips through the West. In Wheeling he exposed a sodomite, who had been expelled from one of the best teacher's seminaries of Germany, serving in the capacity of a preacher. In Indianapolis a gunner was preaching to a German audience, while in another locality farther west a cooper had taken to preaching. After preaching for six weeks he was driven from the town for cruelty to wife and child. When asked why they did not look into his character, Wyneken was told, "He could speak quite well, we had to have a pastor, and he was cheap". (Er konnte gar erbärmlich schwätzen, einen Pfarrer mussten wir haben, und

22 The Home Missionary XVIII, (Oct. 1845), 134; XX (July 1847) 57; XXV (Nov. 1852), 165.
23 The Lutheran Observer XIII (Nov. 13, 1840) 2.

billig war er auch)".[24] These conditions had become so common that Wyneken and other sincere missionaries were looked upon with suspiciton in the early years of their missionary work among the Germans of the West.

By failing to respond to the urgent appeals from the West the General Synod sacrificed a golden opportunity for growth and expansion. Had the left wing of the synod been brought into closer fellowship with the Lutheran immigrant, the bitter controversies of the fifties might have been averted, for it was the immigrant and distinctly German contact that made for a more direct confessional balance in the synods of the West. The success of Methodists and others in Lutheran communities in the second quarter of the nineteenth century shows only too well, that the craving for religious guidance outweighed the prejudice against so called "new measures".[25]

The appeals to Germany that Lutheran missionaries be sent to America to work in cooperation with the General Synod met with little or no response.[26] Preoccupied with their own problems, growing out of the struggle against Protestant church union, the Lutherans of Germany were

24 Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V (1843), 128.
25 The Missionary II (1849), 55.
26 The Lutheran Observer X (Aug. 18, 1843); The Evangelical Review V (Oct. 1853) 269; Der Lutheraner I (Dec. 14, 1844) 39.

unable to give serious thought to the church in America. When in 1841 independent status for the "Old Lutherans", the only ones vitally interested in their brethren in America, had been secured, they were in no mood to cooperate with the "Methodistic" American Lutherans. Even the bright ray of hope, that the romantic Frederick William IV of Prussia might interest himself in "carrying into effect his benevolent design" in America, vanished into thin air.[27]

In 1845 Dr. Hengstenberg, professor in the University of Berlin and editor of the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, was sent to America by the government of Prussia on the seeming mission of ascertaining the condition of the German Churches in America. In the light of his report, as published in the Kirchenzeitung, and the schemes for Prussian colonial expansion in Palestine, California, and Texas, the spiritual status of the immigrants was of little concern to the Prussian sovereign.[28] In a report to the king published in 1847, Hengstenberg pointed out that he found no attempt on the part of the Germans in America "to save even the best and brightest that belonged to their own nationality....and that they had bartered away their language sentiment and German customs".[29]

27 The Lutheran Observer XIII (Dec. 5, 1845); XV (Dec. 17, 1845) 61; (Dec. 24, 1847), 65.
28 Heinrich von Treitschke, Deutsche Geschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert (Leipzig, 1894) V, 121-123; 489-493.
29 Brunecken, op.cit., 15.

In the same year the Prussian minister von Eichorn proposed that the German consuls direct the settlement of immigrants in contiguous territory and the home government assist in building churches and schools.[30] It is needless to say nothing came of this scheme after the report from Hengstenberg.

While the Lutherans were neglecting the German communities of the West, the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians vied with each other to "save the West for Protestantism". Their missionaries in contrast to the few Lutheran pastors in the West did not have to rely on their flock for support. The non-Lutherans were able to enlist Germans for pastoral work in the West.[31] The Methodist Church in particular drew its recruits from all walks of professional life, gave them a hurried religious education and sent them out to "hew their own timber". In 1849 the Methodist Missionary Society reported six thousand three hundred and fifty church members in the German field, one hundred and twelve sabbath schools with one thousand and thirty officers and teachers and three thousand two hundred and twenty scholars. They had ninety-eight churches, forty parsonages, eighty-three regular mission circuits with one hundred and eight missionaries.[32]

30 von Treitschke V, op.cit., 492.
31 Lutherisches Missionsblatt (1851) 143; Der Lutheraner (Dec. 13, 1845) 18; Beecher, op.cit., II:242, 453; The Lutheran Observer II (Apr. 3, 1835) 126.
32 The Missionary II (1849) 66.

The non-Lutherans were not to escape without a serious challenge, for after 1841 the "Old Lutherans" of Germany diverted to America the energy that had been expended in combatting forcible consolidation of Lutheran and Reformed Churches. Their decisive victory in the interest of confessionalism had grounded them more firmly than ever in their convictions, and had engendered in them and their immigrant associates a pronounced aversion to a form of church federation, "Kirchen mengerei", so evident in the "American Lutheran" Church. Their failure to subscribe to a literal interpretation of the Augsburg Confession and the Symbolical Books excluded them from the same communion of faith with the "Old Lutherans"; for the latter interpreted all too literally the passage of the Bible, Galatians 6:11, "As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith". And the "American Lutherans" were by no stretch of the imagination of the household of faith.[33] In writing for Kirchliche Mitteilungen aus und über Nord Amerika the Reverend Willhelm Löhe remarked: "Our readers know....that the Lutheran Church of North America is divided into English and German Lutherans.

33 The Evangelical Review I (Oct. 1849), 280; IV (Oct. 1853), 245, 269; Zeitschrift für Protestantismus u. Kirche V (1843) 125, 153-155; Ziegler, op.cit., 290.

Not only has the English Lutheran departed from the German language but also from the Lutheran doctrines and the Professors of the Gettysburg Seminary head this movement.... In fact we have never expected much from the General Synod. We are not separated from it for we were never united with it. Wyneken and with him, no doubt several honest souls have separated. We regard this quite a gain".[34]

Through the columns of Kirchliche Mitteilungen, a periodical widely circulated in Germany, Löhe stressed the advantage of German over English Lutheran pastors in America. In it he asserted: "Generally speaking the preachers of the German Lutheran Church are no better educated than the English Lutherans. But they have something that raises them far above the English, the German Lutheran theological and religious literature. The English pastor knows nothing of those. As yet there is no good English translation of the Symbolical Books nor of the Lutheran doctrines. The English Lutherans are able to read only the literature of the Episcopal Church and of other religious sects. As the language of the "Yankees" is more commonly spoken and the mother tongue is forgotten, German congregations and educational institutions will be more

34 Geo. F. Fritschel, Quellen u. Dokumente zue Geschichte u. Lehrstellung der ev. luth. Synod von Iowa und andere Staaten (Chicago) 43, 45.

necessary for the perpetuation of Lutheran theology. Only by a gradual transition from the German can the English Lutheran Church be made a reality".[35]

Löhe's ardent concern for the future of Lutheranism extended beyond the confines of Germany into the United States. The refrain that sounded through his appeals and those of the "Old Lutherans" in America was: "You are Germans. You have carried a beautiful language across the sea....Of the languages spoken over there none is more beautiful. Keep what you have. By the grace of God you have an excellent heritage. Do not exchange your language for the English....Your language next to your church is the most precious jewel that you have taken with you into the forest wilderness....With the loss of your language you will lose your history and with it an understanding of the Reformation and of the true church of God; also your beautiful German Bible, your songs which re-echo into heaven, your catechism which has no equal, your postils that are so fervent, your devotional books which speak with such child like simplicity, your liturgies, etc".[36]

To accomplish this end Löhe recommended in 1847, that Lutheran emigrants settle in German communities in the

35 Fritschel, op.cit., 75.
36 Fritschel, op.cit., 29, 30.

United States. "It is a spiritual misfortune that innumerable Lutherans who have emigrated are so scattered and separated. It would be a real blessing if they would hold together and settle in close proximity to each other, and thus make possible the maintenance of a Lutheran pastor. Emigration can not be stopped, but might it not be directed? ....In corresponding with our brethren who have formed a synodical body (the Missouri Synod), we have advised them that we propose to publish where their congregations are located, the conditions under which they are living, the amount of land available within their respective localities, the requirements for membership in their congregations, where new settlements are being made and to what extent they are being supplied with pastors and teachers".[37]

Löhe did more than any other person to rally the Lutherans of Germany to the support of their brethren in the New World. Through his efforts Missionary Societies were founded, and religious periodicals published for the express purpose of keeping alive and financing the new enterprise. From 1841 until the last decades of the nineteenth century the flow of Lutheran theological students and teachers to

37 Fritschel, op.cit., 70.

America to perpetuate the German language and through it Lutheran fundamentalism, continued with but few interruptions.[38]

38 Neve, op.cit., 271

CHAPTER V

GERMANY AWAKENS TO AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL NEED

In the early forties the Lutherans of Germany were made to realize the dangers that beset their nationals in America. No longer could they thrust aside the voice of desperation as coming from isolated communities that concerned them little or not at all, for in many instances their own kith and kin were in danger of spiritual shipwreck. With the surge of emigration mounting steadily who could know what acquaintance or relative might not be obliged to face similar hazards. Missionary societies were founded in various provinces of Germany to devise ways and means to save America for Lutheranism.[1] Reverend F. C. D. Wyneken, who had gone to America in 1838 in response to urgent appeals, portrayed in vivid colors the deplorable state of Lutheranism in America, and in 1842 he returned to Germany traveling up and down that country to arouse the Lutherans to united action, a

1 Der Lutheraner VII (Oct. 28, 1851), 35; VIII (Feb. 17, 1852), 99, (Mar. 2, 1852), 10, (June 8, 1852), 161-163.

movement that reached splendid fruition under the zealous and enthusiastic guidance of Wilhelm Löhe[2] pastor at Neudettelsau, Bavaria.

Friedrich C. D. Wyneken may well be compared with the eighteenth century patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America. His problem, like that of his predecessor Mühlenberg, was to gather together the scattered Lutherans of the West and organize them into congregations. Like the patriarch he had a burning zeal for his mission and physical qualities which enabled him to brave the hardships and dangers of frontier conditions. His broad cultural and theological training at Göttingen and Halle, his genial nature, and stern resolve qualified him to act as a wise councilor in matters temporal and spiritual.[3] Like so many of the Lutheran leaders of his time, the spiritual tribulations through which he passed in Germany gave him a decided confessional outlook.

In 1838, when twenty-eight years of age, an article in a German missionary journal kindled in him a resolve to

2 Der Lutheraner VII (July 22, 1851), 190; Deintzer, op.cit., III, 1-4.

3 Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V (1843), 124; Deinzer, op.cit., III:12; The biographical sketch of Wyneken was taken from G. E. Hageman, F. C. D. Wyneken; Pioneer Lutheran Missionary of the Nineteenth Century; Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V, (1843); Ebenezer, Review of the Work of the Missouri Synod during Three Quarters of a Century, (St. Louis, 1923) 52-55, 381-383.

devote his life to the cause of Lutheranism beyond the sea. He and his friend C. W. Wolf landed in Baltimore in the summer of 1838. In search for a Lutheran pastor they were eventually directed to a Methodist prayer meeting by persons who claimed to be Lutheran. The strange noises from the audience and the repeated shouts of "Amen!....Amen!", disturbed the Lutheran guests and they soon realized they were not attending a Lutheran service. When the Methodist pastor asked at the close of the meeting, "Well Brother Wyneken, how did you like it?", Wyneken replied, "I do not know whether it is of God or of the devil. It certainly is not Lutheran".

The two comrades soon learned, to their dismay, of the ill repute in which Lutheran missionaries from Germany stood. A mere statement on their part that they were Lutherans come to missionate among the Germans of the West immediately awakened distrust in Johann Häsbert, Lutheran pastor in Baltimore, for he surmised they were just two more impostors intending to prey upon the German immigrants. However, in the course of conversation their host was convinced of their sincerity, and the efficiency and success with which Wyneken performed Häsbert's pastoral duties during a period of sickness, dispelled all fears that might still have lurked in his mind. Later Häsbert said of Wyneken: "He is a hero of the faith of that type for which a person, as a rule

looks in ancient times, long gone by. Oh, how his example shames many of us who live in peace and comfort, having abundance of all things, and who are not ready to make the least sacrifice for the lord and his poor brethren! "[4]

In response to a commission from the Synod of Pennsylvania Wyneken chose the states of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan for his field of service. Early in September he left Philadelphia, proceeding by rail to Pittsburg, thence by canal to Ohio, and by horse through Ohio into Indiana arriving at Ft. Wayne toward the end of the month. Here a Pennsylvania Lutheran, Henry Rudisill, had been instrumental in planting a German Colony. When he settled at Ft. Wayne in 1829, he found it a town with a population of one hundred and fifty chiefly French and Indians. He was so successful in persuading Lutheran immigrants to locate in the frontier community, that Wyneken found an organized Lutheran congregation at Ft. Wayne upon his arrival in the fall of 1838.

Wyneken, appointed to the pastorate of this congregation left vacant by the death of Jesse Hoover from Woodstock, Virginia, went to work resolutely to perform the duties of his new office. He ministered to the spiritual needs of the Germans of Ft. Wayne and the outlying communities, and taught

4 Ebenezer, op.cit., 61

four days a week in a parochial school established by him.[5] From Ft. Wayne as a base his missionary endeavor, which carried him into northwestern Ohio and southern Michigan, enabled him to obtain a real insight into the physical and spiritual needs of German frontiersmen.

His charming personality, resolute character, devotion to his mission and his sense of humor, won for him alike the respect of Lutherans and non-Lutherans. Within the wide area of his labors his ready command of the low German dialect helped him win the good will and confidence of the low German peasantry. At all times he proved himself a true pastor entering wholeheartedly into the life of the people with whom he was associated. Not only was he versed in religious matters, but on all occasions he was able to speak intelligently upon farming problems confronting his parishioners. He considered no sacrifice too great in the performance of his pastoral duty.

Wyneken's experience enabled him so to organize the Lutheran missionary program in the West as to gain the best results with the men available. Rather than have the Synod of the West send its missionaries into widely scattered areas, he proposed the establishment of definite missionary

5 Zeitschrift für Gesammte Lutherische Theologie und Kirche, VI, (1845).

posts, from which as centers of operation the missionaries were to extend their efforts into outlying communities and methodically push from outpost to outpost until the field had been thoroughly covered, a system later adopted by the Missouri Synod. He was convinced the Lutherans of Germany might be persuaded to help, if the American Church was unable to supply men and means to carry out his designs.

As soon as Wyneken realized the magnitude of the task, he forwarded urgent appeals for assistance to the Synod of the West, affiliated with the General Synod, and to Germany. Possessed of almost superhuman energy and determination he refused to stand idly by and wait for assistance, for besides his numerous duties he found time to prepare two young men for the ministry. As he grew more restive over the seeming failure of German response to his pleas, in 1842 the missionary committee of the General Synod sent him to Germany where they hoped a personal appeal would reenforce his articles which had, from time to time, appeared in the Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche.[6] Incidentally it was thought the brief sojourn abroad would enable him to recuperate from a throat affection contracted in Indiana.

The high esteem in which his relatives were held

6 Der Lutheraner VII (Nov. 12, 1850), 44; Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V (1843), 125.

in church and governmental circles in various parts of Germany and particularly in his native state of Hanover, enabled him to succeed where many others might have failed. Before he had fully recovered from his throat trouble he corresponded extensively with religious and political leaders and traveled in person throughout Germany giving a vivid description of conditions he had found in the New World. His messages from America to Germany published between 1838 and 1842 had borne fruit and needed only the enthusiasm and organizing ability of Wyneken and his many prominent friends to unite the missionary societies of Lutheran Germany in an effort to save the church in America. Through his personal influence a scene was enacted in Germany which compared favorably with the awakening of the East of the United States to the spiritual needs of the West.

Wyneken's temporary residence in Germany, which brought him into close fellowship with the "Old Lutheran" leaders in that country, without a doubt, hastened in him the trend toward a more strongly confessional conviction and a readiness to oppose the doctrinal stand of the "American Lutherans". Through the Zeitschrift für Protestantismus he administered a staggering blow to the General Synod and the Gettysburg Seminary. The latter, according to his remarks, financed in Germany to foster Lutheranism was gradually assuming the form of a serpent seeking to destroy the

church. He regretted that the General Synod was "Methodistic" and encouraged a union of Lutheran and Reformed churches in America.[7]

In 1843 after his return from Germany he proceeded to put into practice his confessional convictions in his congregation at Ft. Wayne. He set out to enforce Lutheran formalism, and no longer would he permit non-Lutheran pastors to occupy his pulpit, nor would he admit members of the Reformed Church to Holy Communion. He discontinued "Methodistic" prayer meetings and emphasized doctrinal matters in his sermons. In the course of time he had succeeded in arousing what he believed a real Lutheran consciousness within his congregation and through his efforts and those of his successor, Sihler, Ft.Wayne was transformed into a center from which "Old Lutheran" convictions were to be planted and kept alive in the West.

Two years later in 1845, at his new charge in Baltimore, the home of the liberal Lutheran Observer, he pursued the same confessional policy in the face of abuse and violent vituperations. The doctrinal controversy which followed caused a complete break in his congregation. His sermons so shocked his colleagues and were so out of harmony

7 Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche V (1843), 153-155.

with the General Synod, that Wyneken found it advisable to sever his connection with that body. His enemies, "American Lutheran" and Reformed, accused him of being a Romanist and a Jesuit in disguise, an attack particularly menacing at a time when Native Americanism was making progress in the United States. Before departing from Germany in the summer of 1843, accompanied by A. Biewant, a missionary for America, Wyneken had every reason to be filled with optimism concerning the ultimate outcome of his mission. Through his efforts societies were organized in Dresden and Leipzig for rendering spiritual assistance to the German brethren in America, (Verein zur kirchlichen Unterstützung der Deutschen in Amerika). In a memorial, entitled Greetings from the Homeland to the German Lutheran Church in North America and signed by nine hundred and fifty persons from all walks of life, Wilhelm Löhe, champion of confessional Lutheranism in Bavaria, assured his American brethren of German support.[8]

L. A. Petri, pastor in the city of Hanover organized Wyneken's native state into circles over each of which was appointed a central committee for raising funds to send young men to the seminary at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, founded by

8 Hageman, op.cit., 40; Deinzer, op.cit., III:12; Der Lutheraner, I (Dec. 14, 1844), 32, 39; V (Nov. 13, 1849), 44; Zeitschrift für Protestantismus u. Kirche V (1843), 153 ff.

Löhe of Neudettelsau, Bavaria, in 1846. The women of the respective circles supplied the missionaries with the necessary bedding and clothing. This example followed by Mecklenburg and other German states was unusually successful, for between 1846 and 1850, forty men were sent from Germany to complete their missionary training at Ft. Wayne. The state of Mecklenburg raised eleven hundred and four Gulden to send two missionaries to America, and a member of the royal family presented each with one hundred Thaler in Gold. Preceding their embarkation for America the young men sent out by Löhe were entertained and received their final instructions at the home of Petri.[9]

Löhe was the most enterprising of all divines in promoting the welfare of the Lutheran Church in America. To raise the necessary funds he published a monthly journal, Kirchliche Mitteilungen aus und über Nord Amerika, (Church News from and about North America). The publication of this journal met with unusual financial success; the eight thousand copies of the first issue sold netted the publisher a profit of two thousand gulden. In 1847 four years after its first appearance, it still had a total subscription of five thousand five hundred. Löhe's appeals for financial aid appearing in various church publications usually met with liberal response.[10]

9 Deinzer, op.cit., III:18-20.
10 Deinzer, op.cit., III:15.

Owing to the imperative demand for workers in the American mission field, the young men who volunteered were sent to Löhe to be given only the most rudimentary practical training. They were to be "Nothelfer", helpers in an emergency. These accompanied him on the rounds among his parishioners to learn in a practical way how to minister to the spiritual needs of the sick and dying. At night they received such religious instruction as Löhe believed necessary for an efficient execution of their duties. Above all, he was extremely cautious to choose only men of sterling character and real religious fervor.[11]

The charge at Ft. Wayne left vacant by Wyneken to accept a pastorate in Baltimore in 1845 was filled by Doctor Wilhelm Sihler. His broad scholarly training, outstanding administrative ability and intimate contact with the Löhe Foundation in Germany helped to bridge the gap between Lutheran orthodoxy in Germany and America. Through his power of leadership and the subsidies from Germany, Ft. Wayne became the home of a seminary where the "Nothelfer" from the Fatherland received their final preparation for the American mission field. The three, Sihler, Wyneken and C. F. W. Walther, were the outstanding figures in the history of "Old Lutheranism" in America for one supplemented the others in an energetic program of battering down the liberal tendencies of the "American Lutheran

11 Deinzer, op.cit., III:4, 21, 22.

church. They were responsible for founding, building, and guiding through a most trying period what has today come to be the strongest single organized Lutheran group in America.

Sihler, the son of a Prussian army officer, was sent to America by the Dresden Missionary Society in 1843, In 1811 at the age of eleven years he was sent to a German Gymnasium. In 1817 he enlisted in the Prussian army and in 1823 he was enrolled in the war school at Berlin, a kind of Prussian "West Point".[12]

Tiring of the military profession he entered the University of Berlin. Here his interests turned toward philosophy, philology, history, the history of antiquity and music. In Berlin he was welcomed into the prominent social and intellectual circles, and was a frequent guest in the home of Professor Schleiermacher and of the banker, Mendelsohn, the father of the great musician and composer. By experience and training he had become a zealous exponent of German nationalism and confessional Lutheranism. Like Löhe he regarded German language, literature and religious experience a precious heritage to be perpetuated on American soil until an English Lutheran literature had been firmly planted.

12 The facts in the biographical sketch of Doctor Wilhelm Sihler were taken from, Wilhelm Sihler Lebenslauf I, II, (St. Louis, 1879), an Autobiography.

The years following his father's death in 1828, were the formative period in Sihler's religious career. Thrown upon his own resources he secured employment as tutor, a career which compelled him to adopt regular habits and cultivate habits of control. He describes his conversion as having followed a violent fit of temper he displayed while teaching in a school at Dresden. Upon returning to his room he said, he realized his sinful nature and that God crushed him completely with the sledge of his law. From that day he searched the Scriptures diligently and courted the friendship of Christians, in particular pastors who had experienced a religious revival.

Wermelskirch, Lutheran missionary to the Jews of London, persuaded Sihler to join the Dresden Missionary Society in 1836. Through this society he met Doctor Rudelbach, a recognized leader of conservative Lutheranism, who with Wermelskirch stimulated Sihler's interest in the study of the Symbolical books of the Lutheran Church. Their study, says Sihler, convinced him that the only true Church of God upon earth was the Lutheran, and aroused in him a real hatred for the Catholic Church and a contempt for church union which he believed to be the work of the devil.

On his way to Riga to visit an intimate friend Wyneken's appeal from America came to his attention. This

appeal seemed to him the voice of God saying, "You must go". Expressed in his own words: "As a flash of lightning it pierced my soul and it seemed as though God spoke emphatically to me saying, 'You must go over' ". With no personal interest in America and entirely out of sympathy with its political order, Sihler must have found it difficult to heed such a mandate. He looked upon the American Revolution as a wholesome punishment visited upon proud and arrogant England rather than God's guidance in the creation of a new political order. To him the leaders of the Revolution were criminals in the sight of God, and the Declaration of Independence was, at best, but a product of Rationalism.

While in this state of indecision pastors who had read Wynekem's appeal urged him to go. Their promise and that of the Dresden Missionary Society to give him the necessary financial assistance, and their insistance that it was his sacred duty to go to America led him to put aside his personal bias and follow the dictates of his conscience. After a last visit to the Dresden Missionary Society and to Löhe in Bavaria, he set sail for America on September 17, 1843.

The Lutheran Observer in announcing his arrival, had this to say of him: "The Reverend Dr. Wilhelm Sihler, sent to this country by the Missionary Society in Dresden to preach the gospel to the Germans, arrived in this city a few days ago.

The Doctor brings with him the most favorable recommendations from the most orthodox sources, such men as Rudelbach and others of similar views, and he may well be regarded as a a valuable addition to the German Missionary corps. He preached in this city several times with much acceptance and is now on his way to Ohio to find a field of labor. He speaks English with considerable fluency, and in a short time will be able to preach in that language. We regard him as a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman, and we have no doubt he will make a favorable impression wherever he may go".[13]

On his travels through the East, Sihler reached the same conclusion as Wyneken about the character of Lutherans within that part of the United States. He thought the pastors Stohlman and Demme lacked a knowledge of Luther's teachings. He was not particularly impressed with the theological ability of Doctors J. B. Morris and Benjamin Kurtz, editor of the Lutheran Observer, to whom Sihler sarcastically referred as the "so called Doctor of Theology". In a conversation with them he had no hesitancy in attacking the sympathetic attitude of the General Synod toward revivals, which he believed contrary to Biblical teachings.

13 The Lutheran Observer XI (Nov. 21, 1843)

On his westward journey he met Professors Schaefer and Winkler at the Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. Thence he went to Pomeroy, Ohio, where he was ordained pastor and delivered his inaugural sermon January 1, 1844. In this congregation he found, what he considered, un-Lutheran tendencies and proceeded cautiously to eliminate them. He decided to be a real pastor and teacher to his flock, and through the parochial school children, he hoped ultimately to win the parents to Lutheranism. He taught school six days a week, three days in the city and three in the country. In addition to the three "R's", the children were taught the Lutheran Catechism, Bible History, and genuine Lutheran songs so that within a year they could sing thirty Lutheran hymns from memory, and through them they awakened a Lutheran consciousness among their elders.

He conducted religious services four times on Sunday and twice on week days. He tells, that during the busiest season the farmers were ready to stop working at four o'clock in the afternoon to attend religious worship. To stimulate religious convictions he usually had a Bible History lesson precede the regular church service. In spite of his arduous labor he found time for the study of Luther's writings and to write articles for the Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, a publication edited by Friedrich Schmidt of Pittsburg.

At Pomeroy, Ohio, Sihler's efforts were directed toward a gradual but systematic confessional Lutheran education in the hope of eventually overcoming Reformed influences in his congregation. The real test came when he insisted upon administering the Holy Sacrament according to Lutheran ritual, a ceremony that at once differentiates the Reformed from the Lutheran. It is needless to say those out of harmony with his procedure withdrew from the congregation. Determined to complete his task he refused to accept calls to more prosperous fields of endeavor. Through Sihler, at Pomeroy and at Ft.-Wayne, under Wyneken's leadership confessionalism was firmly planted.[14]

As long as Sihler was a member of the Joint Synod of Ohio he took an active part in attempting to stem the tide of liberalism in the synod. He was the recognized leader of the faction favoring characteristically German confessional trends in contrast to the Americanizing influences in the synod and its theological seminary at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. In conjunction with representatives of the Löhe foundation in the synod and of students in the seminary, Sihler hoped to place the German language and through it Lutheran theological literature on a sound footing against the compromising principles so prevalent in English theological literature. This linguistic controversy was finally brought

14 W. Sihler's Lebenslauf II:16.

to a head, when the Sihler faction tried to make the German language the sole medium of theological instruction at Capital University, a program favored by Professor Winkler and a majority of the students. In the first skirmish at the Zanesville, Ohio, convention in 1844, the conservatives gained a temporary advantage by the passage of a resolution that "theological instruction should be given in the Seminary only through the medium of the German language and that the English language should be taught as a literary study". However, when the convention of the following year assembled at Lancaster, Ohio, rescinded the Zanesville resolution and refused to remedy what the confessional wing considered un-Lutheran practices, Sihler and his faction formally withdrew from the synod in September, 1845, and through Sihler the Löhe foundation launched upon an independent venture by founding a practical theological seminary at Ft. Wayne, Indiana. With him Professor Winkler, fifteen pastors and two theological students abandoned the Joint Synod of Ohio.[15]

The new confessional venture formulated in July 1845, met with the whole-hearted approval of the organized missionary societies in Germany. In response to Sihler's request they

15 Deinzer, op.cit., III:14, 20, 22, 23; The Lutheran Observer XI (July 26, 1844); Rechenschaftsbericht des Redaktoren der Kirchlichen Mitteilungen aus und über Nordamerika. Ms. (Nov. 5, 1847) 5-13; Sihler's Lebenslauf II:35-46.

pledged themselves to raise fifty thousand gulden for building purposes, donate books and periodical literature for a library, and immediately send eleven men to receive their final preparation for the Lutheran ministry under Dr. Sihler and Professor Wolter, a brilliant student of theology sent from Germany to assist in the new American enterprise. The preparations had progressed sufficiently by the fall of 1846 that the students could be housed in temporary quarters and actual scholastic work begun.

Once a young man had completed his training there was no lack of opportunity for service. He was sent out by Sihler to hew his own timber, as it were, and gather together the Lutherans of an assigned community into congregations, with the specific instruction to make of the first congregational community a kind of metropolitan center from which missionary efforts were to be extended into all parts of the county. In this way the northwestern Ohio and the Indiana counties adjacent to Ft. Wayne were made strongholds from which confessional Lutheranism radiated.[16]

The zeal for missionary endeavor also awakened an interest in the missionary societies of Germany to convert the American Indian to Lutheranism by settling well organized

16 Deinzer, op.cit., III:33; Der Lutheraner, III (Oct. 31, 1846) 30; The Lutheran Observer, XIX (Jan. 3, 1851); Rechenschaftsbericht der Redaktorem der Kirchlichen Mitteilungen aus und über Nordamerika (Nov. 5, 1847)13-15.

immigrant groups in outlying Indian communities. The most notable of these settlements were made by colonizing a group of Bavarians in the region of Michigan around Saginaw Bay. This plan of civilizing and christianizing the Indian through a kind of Puritan venture was suggested by HattstÄdt, pastor at Monroe, Michigan, a member of the Michigan Synod and a LÖhe "Nothelfer".

The first mission colony was planted by August CrÄmer in 1845, on a sight selected by pastor Schmidt then president of the Michigan Synod. It was named "Frankenmuth" in honor of the settler's homeland. In the course of the next five years other German colonists were added and the isolated region about Saginaw Bay came to be another area from which German cultural and religious influence found its way into adjoining areas. In the Michigan Synod much as in the Joint Synod of Ohio the cleavage between the conservatives and the liberals led to the withdrawal of HattstÄdt, CrÄmer and other LÖhe followers.[17]

This new Michigan project greatly appealed to LÖhe. He was quite confident the geographical separation of this territory from other parts of the United States would serve as a temporary barrier against the "demoralizing English influence". He, like Wyneken and Sihler, lived in constant fear lest in

17 Ev. Lutherisches Missionsblatt, 1851, 142; Deitzer, op.cit., III:38-68; Der Lutheraner II, (Aug. 8, 1846), 98; The Lutheran Observer XIII (Oct. 17, 1845); Rechenschaftsbericht der Redaktoren der Kirchlichen Mitteilungen aus und über Nordamerika (Nov. 5, 1847)18.

America, a country without state supervision over affairs of church, Lutheranism would constantly be faced with the danger of spiritual shipwreck. The most logical solution of their problem seemed to them to colonize the German Lutherans in more isolated regions like Michigan and Wisconsin. Löhe believed that through such a policy his dream of firmly planting "Old Lutheranism" on American soil might eventually be realized.[18]

Through the loyal and enthusiastic assistance of the "Old Lutherans" of Germany conservative Lutheranism made rather important gains in America by the middle of the nineteenth century. Wyneken's appeals to the Fatherland aroused a spirit of militancy unheard of in the history of German Lutheranism, and his personal contact with a changed confessional atmosphere ripened in him a determination not to temporize in matters of doctrine and church practice. It was he who laid at Ft. Wayne, the foundation for the work so ably continued by Dr. Sihler. For years to come men were sent out from Ft. Wayne imbued with the pietistic spirit of a Löhe and a militant and confessional attitude of a Sihler to build a bulwark in the West against the tide of religious liberalism. At the same

18 Rechenschaftsbericht der Redaktoren der Kirchlichen Mitteilungen aus und über Nordamerika, (Nov. 5, 1847), 20.

time the Saginaw Bay settlements of Michigan in close fellowship with Sihler were making their influence felt in that frontier community. Wyneken was taking a determined confessional stand in the East in the face of the relentless and vituperative attacks of the "American Lutherans" through the Lutheran Observer.

CHAPTER VI

THE SAXON AND THE PRUSSIAN LUTHERANS

In the years from 1838-1842, when Wyneken addressed his urgent appeals to the Lutherans of Germany for pastoral aid, two organized Lutheran groups from Germany planted permanent settlements in the West. Neither of these had any direct connection with the Löhe foundation in the early years of their existence. One group from Saxony, under the leadership of Martin Stephan, established settlements in Perry County and in St. Louis, Missouri, while the second from Prussia and Pomerania, headed by Johannes A. A. Grabau, colonized in parts of Wisconsin and Buffalo, New York. In time the former succeeded in so asserting its confessional preponderance that it became the nucleus about which the "Old Lutherans" of America gathered and to which they looked for doctrinal guidance. Neither of the leaders of the Saxons or Prussians felt the need or the advisability of uniting with existing Lutheran synods,

a policy which spared them the schismatic complications that distressed Sihler and Wyneken. Both believed Lutheran orthodoxy would be put upon a more enduring foundation if the German language and culture were fostered in the land of their adoption, a conviction which harmonized with the convictions of Löhe and his followers.

The Saxons who emigrated in 1838 were above all motivated by a desire to find in America a home in which they might worship free from interference by governmental annoyance. Any attempt on their part to organize a church independent of the church of Saxony to escape rationalistic influences in the state church encountered governmental opposition. Pastors who publicly attacked the un-Christian trends of the times were subjected to annoyances and even removal from office, and divinity students in favor of greater spirituality had little hope of receiving pastoral appointments. From the very character of its personnel and leadership the band of almost one thousand Saxons was from the start in a position to assume a place of leadership among the "Old Lutherans" of America, for its membership consisted of a number of ordained clergymen, men of various professions, and many well to do and socially prominent people from Saxony. By voluntary contributions a common fund of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars had been set aside for the purchase of land and to provide for immediate needs in

America.[1]

Stephan, former pastor of St. John's Church in Dresden was well versed in the doctrines of the Lutheran Church. Coming to Dresden at a time when rationalism was rampant people from far and near came to hear the gospel of Christ and through it receive divine forgiveness. Many who were attracted to him because of their opposition to the rationalistic influences of the Saxon Church united with him into an independent religious community. Among those drawn toward Stephan was a group of theological students who received comfort from him in a period of spiritual tribulation.[2]

While students at Leipzig they had banded together for religious worship and theological discussions. They passed through an experience similar to the students at Cambridge in the sixteenth century and of the Wesleys in the eighteenth. In holding themselves aloof from the student life of the German University and devoting much of their time to devotional exercises they brought down upon themselves epithets of "mystics, pietists, obscurantists and hypocrites". A comparative study of Lutheran, Reformed, and United Church brought them to a

1 Ebenezer, op.cit., 1-13; Gunther, op.cit., 19; Jacobs, op.cit 397-398; J. N. Lenker, Lutherans of all Lands (Milwaukee 1896); Wolf, op.cit., 406-409.

2 Evangelische Kirchenzeitung XXVI (Apr. 4, 1840), 218; (Apr. 15, 1840) 241; Gunther, op.cit., 11; Jacobs, op.cit., 398-400; Wentz, op.cit., 151; A. Schieferdecker, Geschichte der ersten deutschen lutherischen Ansiedlung in Altenburg Perry Co., Mo. (Clayton Co., Iowa 1846) 16.

confessional Lutheran conviction. Finding it difficult in Germany to pursue their adherence to the historic confessions of the Lutheran Church, they decided to emigrate to America in response to Stephan's call to all Lutherans of Germany, who were suffering from the spiritual oppression of the Saxon Church to follow him.[3]

Attracted to Missouri through Gottfried Duden's description of the excellent opportunities that awaited the Germans in the Mississippi Valley, the Saxons set sail for New Orleans arriving at that port in January and February, 1839. The larger part of the immigrants under the guidance of Stephan settled in Perry County, Missouri, where they were joined a few days before Christmas by one hundred and forty-one Lutherans headed by their pastor C. F. Gruber.[4] Here they purchased four thousand four hundred acres of land at a cost of tenthousand dollars while the remainder of them, chiefly professional men and artisans, settled in St. Louis where C. H. Walther, one of the Leipzig students, served as their pastor. At Perry County Stephan sought to found a theocratic state in which he aspired to "rule like a Pasha".[5]

No sooner than the colony had been planted the circle of Leipzig students, C. F. W. Walther, Th. J. Brohm, O. Fürbringer

3 Ebenezer, op.cit., 24, 25; Gunther, op.cit., 7, 8, 28; Jacobs op.cit., 397-400.
4 Schieferdecker, op.cit., 16.
5 Wolf, op.cit., 410; Ebenezer, op.cit., 8, 13.

and J. F. Büngor, feeling the need of keeping alive German language and learning, and fundamental Lutheran theology in a new land, put themselves to the task of building a log cabin to be utilized for educational purposes. The curriculum conforming to that of the German "Gymnasium" was supplemented by a course in theology.[6] In spite of the school's early vicissitudes and its slow growth during the first decade of its existence (1839-1850) in Perry County, Missouri, the foundation laid by these exponents of "Old Lutheranism" ultimately matured into Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, today the key institution of the Missouri Lutheran theological system.

The hopes and aspirations of the founders of Concordia College and Seminary were another manifestation of the German nationalism of the early nineteenth century coupled with a sincere desire of building, what they thought, a Lutheran Zion in America. The spirit which pervaded them was quite aptly expressed at the corner stone laying at St. Louis, previous to the transfer of the college to that city. Among other things the speaker remarked, that the school was "not only an institution for training servants of the church, but also a school in which were to be fostered German art and learning (Kunst und Wissentschaft) in the distant Occident of the New World".[7] In the dedicatory address about a month later, July 11, 1850, Wyneken voiced somewhat the same sentiment in the following

6 Ebenezer, op.cit., 229; Gunther, op.cit., 35; Lenker, op. cit., 793.
7 Der Lutheraner VI (June 11, 1850) 162.

words: "The moreecultured group of the English people, through whom the highly prized institutions, education, art, and culture (Pflege und Kunst, und Wissenschaft) have been and are being disseminated, is of German origin, the German spirit (Geist) is the conveyor of this heritage, and the German folk of this country is like unto the Gibeonite woodmen and water carriers in the camp of Israel! What has caused such a contradiction? There were no German educational institutions; to escape decline and Americanization this spirit bore its blossoms and fruits to the glory of the former and to our disgrace. German folk! Here a beginning has been made, the seed has been planted, upon you depends whether it shall grow and be a credit to you by showering upon yours the full abundance of cultural blessing. And you children of the Church! For a long time led astray and deprived of the blessings of the most sacred doctrinal faith (Glaubens), and guided miserably by the masses of sectarians and false prophets! Here an institution has been established that is to send shepherds to you...."[8]

Not many months after their settlement the Saxons faced a religious crisis that brought temporary confusion, but in due time the humiliating experience with their leader made

8 Der Lutheraner VI (July 9, 1850), 179.

for a change and clarification of their doctrinal position which was to be the source of future strength and solidarity. Their leader Stephan was found guilty of defalcation and gross immorality He squandered the major portion of the common fund for household use and personal comfort, and at the time of his exposure he was having a magnificent personal residence constructed.[9] In spite of the suspicion he had aroused in Germany by his nightly wanderings, reports of immorality and hypocrisy, and tyrannical conduct toward wife and children, his followers had such implicit faith in him, that they were blind to his shortcomings.[10]

While yet in Germany he had induced his followers to accept an episcopal form of church organization and appoint him their first bishop. This act was but the initial step leading toward the assertion of complete mastery over their spiritual and temporal affairs. At his group's expense he was magnificently attired in costumes befitting his exalted position. On board ship he assembled the passengers and called upon them to subscribe to a document, in which they pledged obedience to him in both temporal and spiritual matters. At Perry County, Missouri, his episcopacy was affirmed, and here his domineering attitude was such, that any one who refused to render implicit obedience to

9 Ebenezer, op.cit., 26; The Lutheran Observer VIII (Feb. 26, 1841), 2; Schieferdecker, op.cit., 13; Wolf, op.cit., 410.
10 Evangelische Kirchenzeitung XXVI (Apr. 15, 1840) 244, 245; (Apr. 22, 1840) 257.

his mandates was publicly denounced a hardened sinner, excommunicated, only to be readmitted to the fold upon a public confession of his sins.[11] His hold upon the Saxons was strengthened by a provision in the emigration regulations whereby penance (Versöhnung) was declared to be of greater spiritual value than "Word and Sacrament".[12]

C. F. W. Walther was instructed to bring the fallen leader to time. After Stephan's refusal to make amends and his banishment from the colony, the mantle of spiritual leadership fell upon Walther.

At St. Louis, Otto H. Walther, brother of C. F. W. Walther in Perry County, in a public confession before his congregation declared: "In our midst was a man who bore all the marks of Antichrist and was at the same time the idol of his congregation. His disapproval and his ban were dreaded more than God's wrath, and his word was heeded more than the Word of God. What he said had to be respected as though it were a command of heaven. All of us signed a document pledging absolute obedience to a mortal and agreed to guard against all forms of suspicion which might arise in our minds against him".[13]

In the trying days that followed C. F. W. Walther was put to a real test. For a time it seemed as though this sad

11 Evangelische Kirchenzeitung XXVI (Apr. 11, 1840), 234, 235; (Apr. 15, 1840) 244, 245; (Apr. 22, 1840) 257; Deinzger, op.cit III:77; Schieferdecker, op.cit., 11.
12 Ebenezer, op.cit., 26, 27.
13 Evangelische Kirchenzeitung XXVIII (Apr. 10, 1841)

spectacle of corruption and vice would completely disrupt the Saxon congregations. Several deserted their band while others returned to Saxony.[14] Grave doubts arose in the minds of the pastors and flock whether they were in reality a Christian Church, whether the ministers had actually been called and could validly administer their spiritual functions. Some insisted they were a mob (Rotte) whose pastors were not divinely ordained to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. Former church members refused to attend divine worship and conducted religious services in their homes.[15] Any future effort to establish some form of organization was suspected as an attempt to establish an hierarchical or a Saxon consistorial system of church government.[16]

In these trying times Walther was absorbed in deep reflection over matters of doctrine and in an intensive study of Luther's works. He soon reached the conviction, that a congregational form of organization was better adapted to an American environment and by no means inconsistent with sound Lutheran doctrines. In his studies he profited by a document written by a group of laymen in which they protested against the "false, medieval, papistic, and sectarian Stephanistic System of Church Government", and endeavored to define through quotations from Luther and the Confessions the true doctrine of church organization and government. At the debate between Walther and Dr. Adolph

14 Ebenezer, op.cit., 13
15 Ebenezer, op.cit., 26, 27; Gunther, op.cit., 36; Jacobs, op. cit., 401.
16 Briefe von C.F.W.Walther, 2 Vols. (Compiled by F.Fürbringer St.Louis, 1915) I; 11, 12

Marbach, a jurist, who took the position that the colony had ceased to be a Christian congregation, Walther evolved his doctrine of what he believed the true form of church organization,[17] destined to have an important bearing on the subsequent history of the Missouri Synod.

In the course of the debate Walther fought down the doctrine of Stephan that raised the pastor to a position of mediator between God and man, made him the sole interpreter of doctrinal matters, and bound the laymen to render implicit obedience to him in all matters not specifically in conflict with the Word of God.[18] In contrast to this doctrine he advanced the theory that the Church is the totality of all believers "who have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the Word....The name true Church belongs to all those true companies of men with whom the Word is truly taught....and in a certain sense to those who possess so much of God's Word and the Sacraments in purity that children of God may thereby be born".[19] He justified his withdrawal from Germany by declaring that the name Church applies to a heterodox company of believers, like the Saxons, and supported their separation from the Church in Germany on the grounds that "the outward separation of a heterodox company from an orthodox church is not

17 Ebenezer, op.cit., 145.
18 Wolf, op.cit., 412.
19 Ebenezer, op.cit., 144, 145; Nevo, op.cit., 281, 282.

necessarily a separation from the universal Christian Church, nor a relapse into heathenism, and does not yet deprive the company of the name Church. Even heterodox companies have Church power; even among them the goods of the Church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised".[20]

Walther's propositions strongly fortified by citations from the confessions and Luther's writings did much to reassure his followers. The manner in which he met the critical attack of his opponents brought certain of the faltering Saxon pastors and theological students to his way of thinking and placed the Missouri Lutherans on a firm footing. His doctrines, later elaborated in the course of congregation and synod building, have remained the bed rock of the "Missouri" system. Without a doubt, the sad experience with Stephan and Walther's desire to build a structure that would better conform to an American environment brought forth the "Missouri" system of church government based on congregational independence.[21]

H. H. Maurer is of the opinion that, "Without this sad experience at the outset, they would have selfconfessedly accepted the element of group-coherence as objectified by Grabau; in other words, they would have taken the cue for their American selfhood from an

20 Ebenezer, op.cit., 144, 145.
21 Ebenezer, op.cit., 140-148; Gunther, op.cit., 33-47 passim.

offshoot of the Prussian paternalistic Junker Church. It remains to be said that, in this case to judge from the low vitality of that church in America a Saxon Genossenschaft and a Prussian paternalistic Herrschaft would have died together in the free soil of America".[22]

Having removed one of the most trying obstacles to his program, Walther proceeded patiently toward the formulation of a constitution for his new St. Louis congregation, whose pastorate had been left vacant by the death of his brother in January 1841. For two years he had numerous congregational meetings in which he met the objection of critics and convinced them that his proposals conformed to Lutheran precepts. Both within and outside of his congregation were many who looked with apprehension upon all forms of church organization, misgivings that had grown out of past experience, the current of anti-catholic sentiment, and the fear of so called priestly domination in the United States. Not until these fears and misgivings had been allayed was the new constitution adopted in the spring of 1843.[23]

The constitution of Trinity Church bound the congregation irrevocably to the Bible "as God's revealed word

22 "Studies in the Sociology of Religion V: The Fellowship Law of a Fundamentalist Group", American Journal of Sociology XXXL (July 1925), 40.

23 Ebenezer, op.cit., 28, 29, 147.

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23 Ebenezer, op.cit., 28, 29, 147.

and all the Symbolical Books as the extracted Form and Norm of the Word of God". These symbols were to be the confessional basis of the church and the fundamental principles according to which all doctrinal differences were to be adjudicated. Membership in the congregation was restricted to persons who were baptized, subscribed to the above doctrinal books and were at least acquainted with the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Luther. Only such men could be called as ministers or schoolmasters who held themselves "to all the Cannonical Books of the Old and New Testaments, as the Word of God, and to all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church derived therefrom".[24]

This document was soon to be a model for a later synodical organization promoted by Walther and of newly established congregations within the synod founded in 1847.[25] A cursory examination of this rigid rule laid down will suffice to show that its author took an important step toward obviating in the congregation and Synod alike the most serious obstacle to church unity.

Walther's success in firmly founding his congregation on confessional ground was but the first step in creating in the West what, in his opinion, was an historical Lutheran atmosphere. In colaboration with Saxon pastors in Missouri

24 Ferm, op.cit., 125, 126.
25 Gunther, op.cit., 59; Ebenezer, op.cit., 144.

and Illinois, and with the approval of his congregation he began the publication of a small fortnightly Der Lutheraner, in September 1844. Through its colums the editor, Walther, proposed to set forth the doctrines and history of the Lutheran Church, prove it "the ancient true Church of Christ on earth, not merely one of the Christian sects", and expose false doctrines and practices of those in particular, who he felt were spreading them in the guise of Lutheranism.[26] At the same time Der Lutheraner was to assist in breaking down the prejudices against all forms of synodical organization, dispel the mortal fear of clerical dictatorship, and gather into a single body those of like mind with Walther.[27] Probably no task of Walther's measured up to his fond hopes more than this enterprise has through ninety long years, for to compare its pages of today with the very first number will prove that the same spirit is expressed through its colums.

Der Lutheraner was at once acclaimed the oracle of confessional Lutheranism in America. The editor of the Lutheran Observer, semi-official organ of the American Lutheran Church said of it: "With regard to the spirit it breathes we can unhesitatingly say that it is truly evangelical. The contents, which are nearly all original, are not only creditable to the minds of their respective writers, but give the most satisfactory

26 Der Lutheraner I (Sept. 7, 1844); Ebenezer, op.cit., 41-44; Gunther, op.cit., 63
27 Walther's Briefe I:11, 12.

evidence of an intimate and experimental acquaintance with spiritual christianity. There is much in it which we admire and its well written and deeply evangelical articles will doubtless win for it an interesting circulation among our German brethren. We should however remark that it is under the patronage of those ministers of our church in the West, who were at one time more nearly or remotely connected with the famous Dr. Stephan, who figured so largely in the religious movement in Prussia a few years ago. When the true character of this monster of inpiety was brought to light, nearly if not all the ministers who accompanied him to this country remained in the West, and from zealous 'Stephanites' became more zealous Lutherans. They belong to the school known in Germany as 'Alte Lutheraner', or 'Old Lutherans', in contradistinction to those Lutherans in Prussia who with the Reformed united in the present Evangelical Church of that kingdom. After having said this much, it is scarcely necessary to add that the same narrow and bigoted spirit which prevails among this School in Prussia, seems to rule with undiminished force in the West. Thank God, this unholy spirit can never enter our English Churches".[28]

In the years of Walther's active pastorate at Trinity Church, from 1842 to 1850, when he assumed a Professorship at Concordia Seminary, his congregation showed a steady growth in membership and financial well being. In 1842, its total membership was three hundred and twenty-five, and by 1849

28 The Lutheran Observer XIII (Sep. 12, 1845), 3.

the number had nearly trebled. Through its parochial schools many non-Lutheran parents of pupils were brought to religious services and later taken into membership of the church.[29] Trinity assumed the financial responsibility for the publication of Der Lutheraner until it was made the official organ of the Missouri Synod in 1847, and in the trying years of Concordia Seminary's existence in Perry County, Missouri, from 1839 to 1850, its financial obligations were assumed by Walther's congregation.[30]

Walther has been ranked among the outstanding preachers of the Christian Church, and his broad understanding of American institutions, his ability to adapt a German church order to a democratic environment, his leadership and organizing ability, place him with Mühlenberg among the most eminent figures in the Lutheran Church of America. Dr. Bromel in a scientific criticism of great preachers of the Christian Church said: "He speaks so forcibly from heart to heart, he knows always as one of deep experience, how to put in the center the chief theme of the gospel, viz: consolation in the forgiveness of sins, that, from the beginning to end he is heard with great joy....He is as orthodox as John Gerhardt, but as fervent as a Pietist; as correct in form as a university or court

29 Gunther, op.cit., 48, 57, 59, 81; Jacobs, op.cit., 405; Walther's Briefe I: 8, 9.
30 Der Lutheraner VII (Apr. 1, 1851) 81; Gunther, op.cit., 48, 65.

preacher, and yet as popular as Luther himself. He is a model preacher in the Lutheran Church".[31] In his sermons he showed a real appreciation for the country of his adoption, and for the advantages it offered: "We live here in a State in which the church enjoys a freedom unsurpassed since its origin, and at present to be found scarcely anywhere else in the world. Our rulers, instead of allowing attacks to be made upon the rights of the church, exert all their power for the protection of these rights. We have here full liberty to regulate everything according to God's Word and the model of the church in its best days, and to give our church a truly Christian and apostolic form. If we take a glance at our old German Fatherland, how entirely different do we find it! There the church is bound in chains. False teachers, in most churches and schools, have been forced upon the congregations, and the few true ministers have their hands tied. The books which must be used in church and school are filled with the poison of false doctrine. A Christian father can scarcely have the enemy of Christ, as he must regard his pastor, baptize his child without receiving abuse. If he appeals to Christian liberty he is declared a rebel. How happy then, are we, compared with our brethren in our old Fatherland".[32]

31 Quoted in Jacobs, op.cit., 403-404.
32 Jacobs, op.cit., 404.

Aside from his pastoral and editorial duties, Walther maintained an extended correspondence with his co-workers in various parts of the United States. His communications with the Saxon pastors in Perry County, Schieferdecker and Fürbringer in Illinois; Wege in Benton County, Missouri, Brohm in New York City, Geyer in Watertown, Wisconsin Territory, held these "Old Lutherans" together until a synodical organization could be consummated. At all times he showed a live interest in the problems of his correspondents and the pastoral task before them, he constantly advised them to exercise forbearance toward the weak and faltering of their flock. German groups turned to him for advice in spiritual matters and pleaded for his assistance in securing conscientious pastors.[33] All this gave him a better insight into the religious situation of the land of his adoption, enabling him to perform more efficiently his numerous duties, and steer a more consistent course.

He was, without a doubt, the outstanding figure in the Missouri Synod until his death in 1887. The pastors sent out from Concordia Seminary through the many years of his professorial career respected him as an authority in the field of theology and ranked him second only to Luther as an interpreter of fundamental Lutheran doctrines. His spirit and devotion to service still pervades Concordia, and the rigid adherence of

33 Walther's Briefe I, passim.

"Missouri" to the historic confessions of the Lutheran Church are a tribute to the ability of its founder.

The Saxons, whose system of organization was a radical departure from the order of the Church in Germany, could hardly expect to escape the criticism of those "Old Lutherans" in America who had not passed through the same trying days. Even before they had fully recovered from the severe shock Stephan's conduct had given them, their liberal doctrine pertaining to the church was attacked by Johannes A. A. Grabau, leader of a band of Prussian Lutherans who had emigrated to escape Frederick William III's persistent effort at Protestant unity in his kingdom.

Grabau, whose resistance to church union had led to imprisonment for one year and loss of his clerical office, traveled throughout Silesia and other parts of Prussia gathering about him confessional Lutherans for colonization in America. In July 1839, approximately a half year after the Saxons had settled in Missouri, the vanguard of the Prussian refugees landed at New York. A considerable number of them settled in Buffalo, New York, while others colonized in Wisconsin, Michigan and Canada. In subsequent years these colonies were augmented by new settlers from Germany. Like the Saxons they pledged themselves uncompromisingly to the historic symbols of the Lutheran Church,[34] and founded a theological seminary, Martin

34 Evangelical Review VI (Jan. 1853) 418; Ferm, op.cit.,124; The Lutheran Observer VII (Nov. 8, 1839) 3.

Luther College at Buffalo. In 1845 the Prussians met in Milwaukee where they organized the Synod of the Lutheran Church which emigrated from Prussia, the so called "Buffalo Synod".[35]

In the hope of uniting the "Old Lutherans" in the West, Grabau addressed a pastoral letter to the scattered Prussian Lutherans and the Saxons. In the letter he outlined his doctrine of the Church, the Ministry and the Office of the Keys asking the Saxons for a reply stating their position. This letter which was written in 1840 when the Missourians were faced with internal dissensions, was not answered until 1843, after they had reached definite doctrinal conclusions. The Saxon's failure to subscribe to Grabau's tenets, which were almost identical with those of Stephan, was the occasion for a spirited correspondence and heated discussions between the Saxon and Prussian leaders for more than two decades. The repercussions of this conflict in Germany ultimately brought about a new alignment of the Löhe foundation in the United States.[36]

By the middle of the century the Saxon and Prussian Lutheran settlements had become nuclei to which other "Old Lutheran" communities in the West looked for guidance. From

35 Jacobs, op.cit., 396; Ebenezer, op.cit., 124.
36 Ebenezer, op.cit., 148-151; Jacobs, op.cit., 405. This subject is fully discussed in Chapter X.

these centers of orthodoxy and through their parochial schools, which were considered an essential prerequisite for the maintenance of "the Lutheran doctrines in their truth and purity" Confessional Lutheranism was disseminated into adjoining areas. In Perry County, Missouri, and in Buffalo, New York, a start had been made to prepare young men for the Lutheran ministry, and the Löhe foundation was generously supplying the pastoral needs of the West by sending young men to Ft. Wayne, where their training for the ministry was completed. The three distinctly confessional Lutheran groups in America, the Bavarians and followers of Löhe, the Saxons, and the Prussian were separate religious entities until 1847.

Of these the Saxons were the most homogeneous. The religious crisis through which they had passed, the subsequent break with the consistorial church structure of Germany and the adaptation of their group organization to a democratic environment, the statesmanship and theological ability of their leaders, and the fortnightly, "Der Lutheraner" all helped elevate the Saxons to a position of prominence within the ranks of the "Old Lutherans".

CHAPTER VII

AWAKENING OF CONFESSIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN LUTHERAN RANKS IN THE UNITED STATES

The cause of confessional Lutheranism seemed almost hopeless previous to the appearance of Der Lutheraner in 1844. No matter where the "Old Lutheran" looked he discovered church federation, religious liberalism and a neglect of all church symbols. Many German immigrants had broken with the faith of their fathers and were reveling in an atmosphere of political and spiritual freedom. As "Old Lutherans" analyzed American institutions, the situation seemed even more desperate, for, thought they, how could one expect to bring order out of spiritual chaos in a country in which there was no governmental control over religious affairs.

It was into this arena of confusion that Der Lutheraner was launched by Walther to do what it could to salvage what was left of Lutheran orthodoxy. Its reception, within the ranks of those who hoped for the restoration of more fundamental

Lutheranism, was spontaneous and enthusiastic, and the very first number of this fortnightly seemed to fulfill the fondest hopes of a Wyneken and a Sihler. When the former read the first number he exclaimed, "Thank God there are still real Lutherans in America" and the latter remarked later, "It was a great joy to me when the first issue of Der Lutheraner was published in 1844, and after reading the next number I had no hesitancy in recommending it to and circulating it within my congregation".[1] A similar spirit of exultation was heard in the East, where the Henkel brothers were upholding the cause of confessional Lutheranism against the unsymbolical and unionistic tendencies in the General Synod.[2] Pastors impressed with its orthodoxy brought it to the attention of their parishioners and to the amazement of many Der Lutheraner was being read regularly by members of their church.[3] The Tennessee, the Indianapolis and the Eastern District Synod of Ohio, advised

1 Deinzer, op.cit., III:39; Gunther, op.cit., 65; Jacobs, op. cit., 406; Neve, op.cit., 272; Walther's Briefe, 10, 11, 19.
2 Ferm, op.cit., 64; Jacobs, op.cit., 393; Maurer, The Problems of Group Consciousness, in American Journal of Sociology XXX (May, 1925) 671.
3 Gunther, loc. cit.; Walther's Briefe, 19; Sihler's Lebenslauf II:39; Jacobs, loc. cit.; Der Lutheraner II (Mar. 21, 1846)24; IV (Nov. 16, 1847) 48; VI (Oct. 30, 1849) 39; VII (Oct. 29, 1850) 136; Ebenezer, op.cit., 188.

the reading of Walther's fortnightly. Its influence even penetrated into Scandinavian Lutheran communities.[4]

The real challenge of this remarkable publication was "Back, you Lutherans, back to Luther, to his Reformation, church and doctrine"![5] Wherever read, it awakened a doctrinal consciousness and engendered a cleavage in "American Lutheran" ranks by calling attention to inconsistencies in doctrine and practice and a departure from the historic church. In but a few years the trend toward Lutheran and Reformed amalgamation had been checked and the relentless thrusts of Der Lutheraner were having telling effects in the East.[6] The bold prediction of the Lutheran Observer, that "the same narrow and bigoted spirit from Germany could never enter our English churches" was being questioned in numerous localities.

One of the most serious faults Der Lutheraner found with "American Lutherans" was their readiness to compromise in matters of doctrine and cast aside all obstacles to promiscuous Protestant federation. In this respect they were no different than the church in Germany, and therefore brought upon themselves the censure of those who had come to America to escape the careless trends of their homeland. Confirmed in their

4 Der Lutheraner VI (Jan. 25, 1849) 85; (Apr. 16, 1850) 136; VII (Oct. 29, 1850) 136; Stephenson, op.cit., 73; J. Magnus Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism to 1872 (New York, 1926) 148, 151; Jacobs, op.cit., 412.

5 Der Lutheraner V (Sep. 12, 1848) 1.

6 Der Lutheraner VI (Apr. 16, 1850) 136; Ebenezer, op.cit., 29, 43, 44.

opposion to a lax doctrinal and ritualistic stand the "Old Lutherans" were determined to arouse a stronger confessional consciousness within the Lutheran Church of America. The most formidable of the German confessional associations was the Saxons whose periodical did yeoman service in staying the tide toward church union. While the Saxon doctrine on the nature of the church seemed liberal, never the less, it opposed all forms of church union that presupposed doctrinal compromise, for to them but one form of agreement was acceptable, one built upon a rigid adherence to the teachings of the Bible and church doctrines set forth in the Lutheran symbols.[7]

In support of their exclusive stand they quoted from Luther's Works: "Whoever accepts his doctrine, faith, and confession to be true, correct, and sure can not remain in the same stall with others who advance false doctrines or are kindly disposed toward them, nor can he converse on friendly terms with the devil and his knaves. A teacher who is silent in the presence of error and still poses as a true teacher is worse than a sectarian, his hypocrisy does more harm than a heretic, and therefore he is not to be trusted".[8]

7 Der Lutheraner I (July 26, 1845); (Aug. 9, 1845) 98; III (Feb. 9, 1847); IX (Nov. 23, 1852) 49.
8 Der Lutheraner I (Nov. 30, 1844) 28.

Der Lutheraner declared the concessions in Sacramental doctrines and practice by the "American Lutheran" churches a flagrant violation of sound Lutheran teaching. Everywhere it observed a desire of "American Lutheran" pastors to satisfy the religious scruples of all Protestants by issuing to all a general invitation to take part in the Holy Sacrament. To avoid offending the conscious scruples of non-Lutherans who object to the doctrine of the "real presence" in the Lord's Supper the pastor quoted Christ as having spoken the words of institution, leaving the question of interpretation to the particular individual, and to satisfy communicants of the Reformed Church the breaking of the bread was made an indispensable part of the ceremony.

Nothing could have aroused any more the indignation of the editorial staff of Der Lutheraner than the above form of service. They insisted that the practice of saying "Christ said" was an outright evasion of a basic doctrine of the church, that the body and blood of Christ was actually received by each and every communicant; and to admit to this sacred rite by general invitation was a violation of a spiritual responsibility vested in the pastor. It was his duty to do all in his power to prevent one from receiving the body and blood of Christ unworthily to his own condemnation. For by so doing the minister made himself a party to a sinful act. Though the breaking of the bread was not considered a violation of Lutheran doctrines,

it was, nevertheless, declared a concession to the Reformed doctrine that made the breaking of the bread a ritualistic requirement. Der Lutheraner left no one in doubt as to the policy it thought should be pursued by a real Lutheran Christian and a pastor.[9] In like manner a refusal to accept literally the words of Scriptures pertaining to Holy Baptism was condemned as an un-Christian act. To the Saxons the Sacraments were means of grace "valid unto salvation".[10]

So complete a departure from the nineteenth century trends in theology could hardly expect to escape the violent criticism of the Lutheran Observer, spokesman of the left wing of the "American Lutheran" party. It publicly declared: "Be it known, therefore, to all whom it may concern that however we may agree with him on the question of new measures, we do not think alike on some antiquated and partly exploded doctrines. We differ toto coelo as to the mode of our blessed Lord's presence in the eucharist. The Scriptures plainly teach Christ's presence in the Supper, and afford just grounds to believe that special blessings are communicated by him to all worthy communicants; but that the bread and wine are more than symbolic

9 Der Lutheraner I (Dec. 28, 1844) 35; II (June 13, 1846) 81; III (Dec. 29, 1846) 51, 52; IV (Sep. 8, 1847-Aug. 28, 1848) passim; VI (June 11, 1850) 165; (Aug. 6, 1850) 198; 199; VII (Jan. 21, 1851) 87; (Apr. 15, 1851) 135; (May 27, 1851) 135.

10 Der Lutheraner I (Dec. 28, 1844) ;VII (Jan. 2, 1851)passim.

representations of his absent body, we do not believe, and indeed can not, so long as the unerring word of God remains the guide of our faith"...."Christ used the words this is, etc, because the language he used contains no words to express 'represents' or 'denotes'."[11] "These days of Sacramentarian controversies it is very important that our minds be kept in an even balance, lest in preserving ourselves from one extreme we should find our opinions preponderating in favor of another. We are bold to affirm that no proposition has been offered to the suffrage of man more absurd than the real personal corporal presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. Transubstantiation is the most offensive of this dogma, consubstantiation is bad enough and sooth to say so near akin to the former.... The communion of the body and blood of Christ is a spiritual communion".[12] "It is too late in the day to revive such antiquated notions. If ever they were believed by the mass of Lutherans in this country, they are not now. They have been shaken off long ago, and if we have not greatly mistaken the age in which we live, it is labor in vain to attempt to render such notions current again. A few men, no doubt in most instances, well meaning and pious men, may still hold to them; and we have no great objection to it, since they do not enter into the essential features of the Christian system, but that

11 The Lutheran Observer (July 30, 1841).
12 The Lutheran Observer (Dec. 31, 1847), 70.

they can ever be made to prevail in the Lutheran Church of the United States, is utterly impossible....Besides, if left alone, it will of itself die a natural death; it is already nearly exploded in the Lutheran Church of the United States, and to a considerable extent in Germany, and it is undoubtedly destined to an early grave throughout enlightened christendom. These are clearly our views, and if mistaken, we ask for no more indulgence than we cheerfully extend to others".[13]

The Saxons were as uncompromising in their support of the Lutheran confessions as they were toward the Sacraments. They declared the Augsburg Confession and the Symbolical Books, "the pure and uncorrupted explanation and statement of Divine Word".[14] Dr. Dau's statement of only a few years ago is the same as that of his predecessors, the Saxons in the middle of the nineteenth century. He said: "For one to declare that he accepts the Lutheran confessions 'as far as' they agree with the Scripture, not only throws suspicion on these confessions but also opens the door to doctrinal latitudenareanism and insincerity".[15] The Book of Concord, adopted almost thirty years after Luther's death, was accepted by the Saxons as an important doctrinal book of the church, "promulgated by nearly three hundred pastors to force out of the church the leaven of Calvinism". They declared, this convention was as important as

13 The Lutheran Observer, (Aug 13, 1841)
14 Ferm, What is Lutheranism? 4
15 Ferm, What is Lutheranism? 219

the great councils at which the creeds of the church were formulated, for by the doctrines enunciated in the Book of Concord the Lutherans were set apart from the "Romans, Reformed, Methodists and other sects".[16]

Again the Lutheran Observer questioned the stand of the, so called, Symbolists and declared "they merely argued in a circle, 'Why do you receive the Symbolical Books?' 'Because their interpretation of Scripture is correct.' 'How do you find out what is correct?' 'By comparing with the Symbolical Book and interpreting them in accordance'. It is but another form of sophistry of the Roman church, which proves the divine origin of the Bible from the authority of the church, and then proves the authority of the church from the Bible. It is the Augsburg Confession alone which has been recognized during all periods, and in every part of the church in her distinctive existence".[17]

The editorial staff of Der Lutheraner was by no means content to take a firm stand in support of the Sacraments and the confessions, but it carefully scrutinized Lutheran publications and called attention to what it considered false doctrines appearing in their columns. A cursory examination of hymnals in common use in Lutheran Churches disclosed an intrusion of Reformed songs, an omission of those setting forth the doctrine of justification by faith through Word and Sacrament, and the

16 Der Lutheraner IV (Nov. 30, 1847) 49; VI (May 14, 1850) 150; (June 11, 1850) 163, 165; VII (Apr. 15, 1851) 133.
17 The Lutheran Observer (Sep. 22, 1848) 151; Der Lutheraner VII (Nov. 26, 1850) 55; (Jan. 7, 1851) 77.

absence of many composed by Luther and his contemporaries. Such discrepancies were carefully singled out and brought to the attention of the layman by constantly keeping before him the extent to which the respective hymnals savored of rationalism, pietism, and Methodism and were out of harmony with the songs that had been sung by his Lutheran mother. Of the books in common use the St. Louis hymnal, a Missouri publication, was declared to be of greatest doctrinal merit.[18] Other Lutheran publications were dealt with in similar manner.

Any shift toward the right by the more liberal Lutherans in America and Germany was seized upon by Der Lutheraner as an omen of confessional success and approval of its policy. In Germany it noted such strides in the direction of conservatism, that it predicted the "Old Lutherans" would ultimately be forced to depend on their own resources to supply preachers for their churches. It found a source of satisfaction in the growing interest in a study and dissemination of the Lutheran symbols and English translations of parts of the Reformers works, so that by 1850, Der Lutheraner could note with pride that the seed of discord sown within the "American

18 Der Lutheraner VI, (June 12, 1849) 167; (July 24, 1849) 192; (Aug. 7, 1849) 198; VII (Nov. 12, 1850) 42; (Nov. 26, 1850) 55; (Jan. 7, 1851) 77; (Oct. 1, 1850) 20; (Oct. 29, 1850) 35.

Lutheran" camp was bearing abundant fruit.[19]

The Saxon's insistence upon tenets of Medieval theology which elevated faith above reason in matters spiritual, the refusal to break with the ceremonial and symbolical worship of the Catholic Church not contrary to Biblical teachings, and the retention of the cross, crucifix, altar, candles and the like, exposed them to the accusation of being "Romanists". This attack became more severe as the cause of symbolical Lutheranism assumed greater proportions and the tide of "Native Americanism" increased. Reformed and "American Lutherans" alike took pleasure in hurling at the "Old lutherans" the epithet, "Romanists", and denouncing them of being a "sect that leads to Rome".[20]

The same conservatism characterized the Saxon's political attitude. Their interpretation of the Scriptural statements of the relationship between the government and its subjects was as literal as that of matters spiritual. Any form of government able to command obedience was declared of divine

19 Der Lutheraner II (May 7, 1846) 56; IV (Aug. 8, 1848) 198; VI (Jan. 8, 1850) 65; (Apr. 30, 1850) 139; (July 23, 1850)190; VII (Mar. 4, 1851) 109; (July 22, 1851) 139; VIII (Mar. 2, 1852) 108; IX (Apr. 26, 1853) 115; (May 10, 1853) 125; Synodalbericht VII (1853) 40; Jacobs, op.cit., 417; Form, ~~op.cit., 127, 128, 129;~~ The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 127, 128, 129.

20 Der Lutheraner III (Oct. 17, 1846) 20; (Oct. 31, 1846) 27, 28; IV (Sep. 8, 1847) 7; VI (May 14, 1850) 150, 151; VII (Apr. 15, 1851) 133; The Lutheran Observer VIII (July 30, 1841); (Aug. 13, 1841); XII (Apr. 18, 1845) 63; XV (Dec. 31, 1847) 70; Stephenson, op.cit., 26.

origin, and every Christian subject was, therefore, sacredly bound to obey the government "that exercised authority over him", as long as it did not interfere in matters of conscience, and even then the individuals only recourse was one of passive resistance. Concerning revolution Walther said: "We believe every revolution is sinful, and that all governments and constitutions are of divine origin no matterhow they originated". In this respect the political philosophy of the Saxons did not differ from that of Luther, who called upon the princes to use force in putting down the Peasants Revolt.[21]

The acceptance of this philosophy of state enabled the Saxons to escape the sectional divisions over the slavery question which other Protestant denominations encountered.[22] Throughout the period of controversy Der Lutheraner, spokesman for the Saxons, assumed a neutral attitude toward the burning issue and was ready to condemn the extremists of both sides. It declared the emancipation of slaves on the island of Martinique a calamity that was detrimental to both races, for a considerable majority of the negroes, opposed to manual labor, resorted to robery and violence against the whites. The period of slavery was declared an age of transition in the life of the

21 Der Lutheraner V (Sep. 19, 1848) 12; (Apr. 2, 1849) 127; (Apr. 17, 1849) 133; VI (Oct. 30, 1849) 37; XVII (May 14, 1861) 39;53, 156; J. C. Dietrich, Doktor Martin Luther's Kleiner Katechismus in Fragen und Antworten (St. Louis, 1895) 24; Deinzer, op.cit., I:65; Maurer, Studies in the Sociology of Religion, in American Journal of Sociology XXXI (July 1925) 56; Political Attitude of the Lutheran Parish in America, in American Journal of Sociology XXXIII, (Jan. 1928) 573; Dunning, op.cit., II; 10.

22 Der Lutheraner XVIII (Oct. 16, 1861) 39.

race, in which the negro was to be prepared by a process of Christian education to assume the responsibilities as well as the privileges obtained by emancipation. In a reflection on the sectional antipathy Der Lutheraner declared, "the hostility between the North and South is daily assuming greater proportions. The bold declaration of the South in support of slavery and the interference of the fanatical abolitionists with the property rights of the slave holders are to be regretted, for they complicate the status of the poor slaves and make life for more intolerable for them."[23]

Such a radical departure from the currents of American political ideals did much to widen the gulf between the "American Lutherans" and the Saxons. The latter were opposed to an appeal to arms in overcoming political, economic, or social oppression. While loyal to the government of the United States they looked upon the American Revolution like most revolutions as products of rationalism and atheism. The "American Lutherans", on the contrary, so much a part of that great world movement, looked upon the Revolution in Europe as an act of Providence to establish free and democratic institutions. Therefore they enthusiastically united with the majority of the American people in giving their moral support to the revolutionary uprisings that were shaking the thrones of Europe and portending the creation of constitutional and democratic

23 Der Lutheraner V (Jan. 23, 1849) 88.

institutions in the Western World.

No matter what the circumstances that gave rise to the European uprisings in 1848, the Saxons could find nothing in the Scriptures which warranted a resort to arms for a redress of grievances. Der Lutheraner was ready to admit the revolts were the punishment of God visited upon the princes for their despotic rule, but in spite of the people's just grievances it declared acts of violence wholly unjustifiable. The "American Lutherans" were severely censured for having so enthusiastically welcomed Kossuth, of Hungary, and declared him a martyr for the cause of liberty. The German "fortyeighters" fared even worse than Kossuth, for in spite of the high public acclaim given them in America, they were severely censured by Der Lutheraner for the demoralizing religious and social influences their more prominent leaders exercised through the German press. Lutherans were advised to refrain from becoming a party to their socialistic and atheistic activity by subscribing to newspapers edited by German political refugees.[24] After citing a number of passages from the German journals Der Lutheraner asks its readers: "Do these leading German organs in the United States express the opinions of the German population? Are they the mouthpiece through which the German

23 The Lutheran Observer XVI (Apr. 14, 1848) 58; XX (Jan. 2, 1852); (Jan. 9, 1852) 627; (Feb. 6, 1852) 643; Der Lutheraner V (Sep. 12, 1848) 1; (Sep. 19, 1848) 12; (Apr. 2, 1849) 127; (Apr. 17, 1849) 133; VI (Oct. 30, 1849) 37; (Feb. 4, 1851) 92, 93; VII (Feb. 3, 1852) 92-96; (Apr. 27, 1852) 142; (June 8, 1852) 164; VIII (Mar. 1, 1853) 86; Bruncken, op.cit., 33.

population speaks? Are you, German fellow citizens, ready to declare yourselves in favor of the blasphemy of the socialists? Are you ready to destroy religion, property, and the family and send your children to foundling institutions?"[25]

Der Lutheraner had drawn the line of cleavage so sharply between the Saxon and the "American Lutherans" as to shatter all hope of compromise. A Lutheran was either for or against the Saxon and could only hope to retain spiritual fellowship with him by subscribing unreservedly to his doctrinal philosophy. In any liberal Lutheran community in which exponents of the Saxon cause were found, strife and schism was inevitable, until the Saxons had freed themselves of the leaven of "Calvinism, Methodism and rationalism". The hostility they encountered on all sides merely confirmed their convictions, strengthened the bond of loyalty among them, and awakened a resolve to bring about and maintain a synodical union for mutual endeavor to perpetuate and spread their confessional Lutheran convictions.

25 Der Lutheraner VII (Feb. 4, 1851) 92, 93.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MISSOURI SYNOD. ITS ORGANIZATION AND POLITY

The spontaneous approval that greeted Der Lutheraner when it first appeared, exceeded the fondest hopes of Walther, its editor. Its regular appearance led to an extended correspondence and intimate friendship between Walther and the Saxons on the one hand and other confessionally minded Lutherans like Sihler and Wyneken on the other, which eventually culminated in a synodical union. At the time, both Wyneken and Sihler were on the verge of a break with their synodical affiliates in the General Synod and the Joint Synod of Ohio respectively. Months before Sihler formally withdrew from the Joint Synod of Ohio, he had been in correspondence with Walther concerning the status of the Saxons and the possibility of entering into some form of synodical fellowship with them. When Wyneken and Sihler were considering synodical separation, the Bavarians, Lutherans in

Michigan territory, were taking steps to sever their connection with the Michigan Synod.[1]

In the course of his correspondence with Sihler and others, Walther formulated certain principles, which he believed should guide them in forming a synodical union. The unfortunate Stephan incident and the violent opposition to any form of church federation by a large number of Germans in the West convinced Walther of the need of proceeding cautiously. Within his own congregation was still a deeply rooted antipathy for any program favoring congregational consolidation, for fear such an act might be a first step toward an hierarchical order, in which the shepherd contemplated complete domination over his flock. Before his congregation would agree to a synodical order Walther was obliged to analyze in detail every part of the constitution and prove the new document in no way impaired its independence.[2]

Though apprehensive of a democratic form of church organization, Walther observed that he was unable to find anything in the Scriptures or Luther's writings which precluded such a form. In fact, he seemed confident that the freer the church

1 Walther's Briefe I:10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 21; The Lutheran Observer XIII (Dec. 19, 1845); Deinzer III, op. cit., 24; Ebenezer, op.cit., 48, 49, 50, 95, 97; Jacobs, op.cit., 406; Gunther, op.cit., 65.

2 Walther's Briefe I: 11, 12; Deinzer III, op.cit., 28; Gunther, op.cit., 69.

was in a free state the greater were its chances for success. He was opposed to the concentration of authority in a synod, but favored a confederation of congregations to promote common action against corrupting church influence, "foster the unity of the Faith", adopt a uniform liturgy, and serve as a kind of court of arbitration to which the pastors and congregations would be at liberty to present their respective grievances. He believed that in all matters of church polity the synod was to act in an advisory capacity and function as a guarantor of the rights of its constituent congregations.[3]

In the proposed constitution the prime source of misunderstanding, strife and disintegration was obviated once and for all times, for it laid down certain irrefutable doctrinal truths as basic guides in all religious controversies. Walther insisted that the constitution of the synod, like that of his congregation adopted in 1842, should contain an explicit statement of Lutheran principles, to which all signatory congregations must subscribe and adhere without reservations. To reject either of these automatically barred the individual from both congregational and synodical membership. In all other matters he advocated the broadest kind of congregational independence and freedom of action.[4]

3 Deinzer III, op.cit., 28; Walther's Briefe I:16.
4 Walther's Briefe I:18; Der Lutheraner XIV (Jan. 26, 1858) 90.

Walther's idea of a democratic synodical organization with complete congregational autonomy in questions of church polity did not meet with Sihler's or Löhe's whole hearted approval. Both of them by nature prejudiced against democratic institutions, could sense only disaster confronting an organization like the one Walther proposed, in which there was no central agency to supervise the respective congregations and pastors for an assurance of uniformity of doctrine and practice. For if such an arrangement was essential in Germany, where the princes exercised a restraining influence against doctrinal divisions, it seemed to them even more necessary in America, where the conception of a free church in a free state was recognized. However, their desire for some kind of central organization so outweighed their prejudice, that Löhe advised his followers in America to enter into a synodical arrangement with the Saxons, and Sihler with Ernst and Lochner agreed to participate in preliminary conversations with Walther and five others at St. Louis in the spring of 1846.[5]

In the course of these conferences Walther encountered a stubborn resistance to a synodical union by his own church. Throughout eight long sessions with his congregation his patience and analytical skill were taxed to the utmost to prove

5 Deinzer III, op.cit., 25, 30, 31; Rechenschaftsbericht, op. cit., II, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly VII (Oct. 1934) 77.

to them nothing would be done to impair congregational autonomy. These meetings and the personal conferences between Walther and his guests won them over to his way of thinking and to an acceptance of his theological leadership. Löhe's followers capitulated so completely to the Saxon leader that they refused to follow their spiritual father in Germany, when he later severed all connections with the newly created Missouri Synod.[6] Sihler said of Walther's influence: "He was also, above all others the vitalizing and organizing genius in outlining the principles for an orthodox (i. e. Lutheran) union of congregations or synod".[7]

The outlines of a constitution drawn up at St. Louis were presented to a larger conference of delegates at the residence of Dr. Sihler at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, in July 1846. This meeting was attended by sixteen representatives from Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and New York. After a thorough debate upon the respective articles of the fundamental document, the convention decided to publish the constitution in Der Lutheraner of September 5, 1846, thus giving the various congregations ample time to study the instrument before its final adoption at a synodical meeting to be held in Chicago. On April 26, 1847, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States was founded, consisting of twelve voting members,

6 Deinzer, op.cit., 26, 27, 29; Ebenezer, op.cit., 96,97, 98; Walther's Briefe I: 14, 21.
7 Neve, op.cit., 272.

ten advisory members (members whose congregations had not yet joined the synod) and two candidates for the ministry.[8]

The most important amendment to the constitution guaranteeing complete congregational independence was proposed by Walther's church. It specifically declared the Synod an advisory body whose resolutions could only bind the individual congregation upon its acceptance of the terms. Any constituent member of the Synod was empowered to object to resolutions on the grounds of Scriptural inconsistency and inadaptability to congregational needs.[9] Löhe was never able to reconcile his theory of church government with that of the Missouri Synod. When he agreed to the transfer of his foundation, the Ft. Wayne Seminary, to the synod in 1848, he was quite frank in voicing his disapproval of complete congregational autonomy in the following words: "We have made the sad observation, that your synodical constitution can not claim to follow the example of the first Christian Church, and we justly fear that the adoption of democratic, independent, congregational principles will be a greater source of danger than the interference by princes and governments in church affairs in Germany".[10]

In spite of the grave doubts of many of the critics of the time, the Missouri Synod stands today as a glowing tribute to the leadership and prophetic vision of its founder. Walther had eliminated from the new structure the most serious

8 Ebenezer, op.cit., 87, 94-109; Jacobs, op.cit., 406; Lenker, op.cit., 794.
9 Ebenezer, op.cit., 103.
10 Deinzer, op.cit., 35; Fritschel, op.cit., 81.

obstacle to synodical unity by making it incumbent upon every congregation to subscribe to specific and unalterable doctrinal declarations for membership in the larger group. A church was either for or against "Missouri" on the basis of the following articles: "The acceptance of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practise. Acceptance of all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and correct statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit: the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicaean Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as serving union congregations composed of members of churches with different confessions as such; taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of such of mixed confession; joining the heterodox in missionary efforts or in the publishing and distribution of literature; exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymn books, and catechisms in church and school; providing the children with a Christian school education".[11]

11 Ebenezer, op.cit., 101-102.

Through the founding of the Missouri Synod were united some of the ablest and most aggressive champions of confessional Lutheranism in America, and the synod was made the agency through which the Löhe foundation carried on its missionary activity until the year 1852. The Saxon's lack of numbers was offset by the intelligent, practical, and statesmanlike leadership they contributed to the synod. The Löhe followers, approximately two thirds of the clerical membership, added numerical strength and a more widely distributed field of activity than the Saxons. Associated with them was that stalwart Sihler, founder of the seminary at Ft. Wayne, the one through whose intimate connection with the confessional movement in Germany men and money were placed at the disposal of "Missouri".[12] Wyneken's affiliation with "Missouri" in 1848, brought to the new organization that broad understanding of the religious needs of the immigrant Germans, gotten only by extensive travels throughout the Middle West. Through his family connections he was able to draw to the support of his colleagues many of the government officials of Hanover who rendered invaluable service in directing emigrants to Lutheran centers in America.

The intimate fellowship of the "Missouri triumvirate", Walther, Wyneken and Sihler, as well as their associates, enabled the Synod to rise to a position of preeminence and leadership among the "Old Lutherans" of America. Throughout almost

12 Deinzer III, op.cit., 29, 32.

forty years[#] of the triumvirate's personal leadership the symbolical reins were drawn more tightly and the machinery of synodical activity was so well developed, that today the "Missouri Synod" stands a monument to their untiring and loyal efforts. Through their activity was built up the morale of a Lutheran body which has accepted as its most sacred mission to guard against doctrinal dissent through the assumption of the stewardship of "Das Wort und die reine Lehre" (the Word and pure doctrine).[13]

With a singleness of purpose unheard of in the history of the Lutheran Church in America the pastors of "Missouri" set out to achieve their aims, the awakening of a confessional consciousness and gathering under one common banner all of like mind with them. They advanced methodically and systematically from established congregational centers into outlying communities and spared no effort to secure a foothold in important metropolitan areas, linking these with the American ports of entry and the German harbors of embarkation into a common system for immigrant aid. Valuable assistance was given their alien nationals in a new land, which enabled them to escape the serious dangers that so frequently confronted the immigrants of the past. The number of Germans brought into the fold of "Missouri" through this philanthropic

[#] Walther died in the year 1887, Sihler in 1885, and Wyneken in 1876.

13 Ebenezer, op.cit., 31-52, 64, 76.

service will never be known, but no one will deny that it was labor well spent.

In spite of the censure of exclusiveness hurled at pastors of the Missouri Synod by the "American Lutherans" and "Old Lutheran" factions, the sincerity and devotion to their calling was rarely questioned. This reputation and the larger number of ministers at the synods disposal focused the attention of congregations upon "Missouri" when in need of or dissatisfied with their pastors.[14] Never able to respond to all requests the synodical leaders weighed each petition and filled the positions that held out the greatest prospects for future growth and expansion. The Middle West, where the leaven of religious liberalism had not yet obtained a firm foothold, was considered of strategic importance for building up real confessional Lutheranism. Colporteurs were sent throughout this region to search out German settlements, and by distributing Lutheran literature establish contacts which would lead to the final establishment of congregations.[15]

The abler men were usually sent to the urban centers located in the heart of German settlements. From these nuclei missionary operations were extended into outlying communities,

14 Ebenezer, op.cit., 186.
15 Walther's Briefe I:12-71 passim; Deinzer III, op.cit., 23; Home Missionary III (Jan. 1850); Synodalbericht II (1848) 15; (1851) 91; (1852) 24; (1853) 35.

so that in less than a decade after the founding of the Missouri Synod the important western metropolitan areas of Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Louisville, had one or more "Missouri" congregations. Similar thought was given to the important seaports of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans. These were the centers from which direct contact with Germany was maintained and the immigrants were given necessary aid and directed to Lutheran communities in the interior.[16] Through this arrangement the "Missouri Synod" was assured of a consistent growth as long as the tide of German immigration continued, regardless of the normal increase in congregational membership.

It was but natural that the Missouri Synod, of immigrant origin, would be vitally interested in the new settlers from Germany. As early as 1848, plans for an Immigrant Aid Society were formulated to unify all the agencies of immigrant aid. Lacking the financial resources, immediately to put the program into operation, existing local committees were continued until the synod was in a position to assume the work. In New York City, the Reverend Theodore J. Brohm, a Saxon, soon after his appointment to the pastorate of Trinity

16 Synodalbericht I-VII (1847-1854), passim; Walther's Briefe I: 66, 67, 71; Der Lutheraner VIII (May 1852); IX (Nov. 9, 1852), (July 5, 1853); Zeitschrift für Protestantismus u. Kirche V (1843) 167.

Church in 1843, busied himself with the relief of German immigrants. Until 1853 he and members of his congregation bore the total burden and responsibility of this mission, and even after the synod relieved them of the financial obligations, the original committee functioned as a kind of immigration committee.[17]

Every opportunity to establish themselves in important sea ports was seized upon. A newspaper report from New Orleans, that many German Lutherans had settled in that city, led to the despatch of George Volk to the new field in 1852, and his ordination and installation into the ministry of the newly organized congregation in New Orleans. The rapid growth of German population and the trend toward confessional Lutheranism brought additional New Orleans congregations to "Missouri" in 1854 and in 1874.[18] Still another strategic coastal position was claimed in 1863, when a decided trend toward a positive doctrinal position engendered by Der Lutheraner brought Zion Church of Boston into the Missouri Synod.[19] So wherever the German immigrant landed he was able to find one or more "Missouri" ministers and congregations ready to assist and direct him to Lutheran communities where his spiritual interests would be served.

17 Synodalbericht VIII (1853) 39.
18 Ebenezer, op.cit., 365, 367; Der Lutheraner VII (Oct. 14, 1850).
19 Ebenezer, op.cit., 188.

This was but a part of the strategy, for through its close affiliations in Germany the synod was able to reach the Lutheran before he left his native shore. At Bremen, Hamburg, Stade, Verden and important inland cities, friends of the Missouri Synod were glad to furnish the emigrant with literature giving information concerning the spiritual hazards in America and the location of Lutherans beyond the sea. As early as 1848 a candidate for the ministry was stationed at Bremen as an agent for the "Old Lutherans" of Germany and "Missouri".[20]

The expansion of the Missouri Synod and the extension of its confessional influence into liberal strongholds of the East was one of the outstanding events in the history of Lutheranism in America. In seven years, 1847 to 1854, its membership had increased more than tenfold in pastors and congregations. This growth necessitated a reorganization of the body to meet changed conditions and provide for future expansion. The synod was divided into four districts, the Western embracing Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa; the Middle, Indiana, and Ohio; the Northern, Wisconsin and Michigan; and the Eastern, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland.[21]

With a real zeal for doctrinal unity the Missouri Synod set up an additional safeguard by providing for a systematic visitation of its constituent parts. The constitution made

20 Der Lutheraner VII (Feb. 17, 1852) 97, 99, 100, 101; (Mar. 2, 1852) 132; (Apr. 27, 1852) 138; (May 11, 1852) 145; (June 8, 1852) 161, 162; Syndolabericht II (1848) 15.

21 Synodalbericht VI-VIII (1852-1854), passim.

it incumbent upon the president of the synod to visit each congregation once during the three years term of his office and report his findings to the general body. He was expected to hear at least one sermon by the pastor, attend the catechetical instruction, inspect the parochial school, attend a congregational meeting and in general acquaint himself with the doctrinal and ritualistic practices of the church. When the increase of membership necessitated a redistricting of the synod into district synods, these duties were delegated to the district president or specially appointed visitors within the larger districts.[22]

For the system of congregational visitation the Lutheran Observer predicted ultimate failure and loss of membership to the Missouri Synod, neither of which would have been objectionable to the editor. He saw in the authority vested in the president the entering wedge of episcopacy, an innovation that would raise a cry in any "American Lutheran" community. It was predicted that this system could not succeed in America and would have to be abandoned by the "Old Lutherans" before three years of the president's term had expired. However, the tactful policy of the synod's two presidents, Walther and Wyneken, in the first seventeen years of its existence, set a precedent for congregational inspection that met with general approval.[23]

22 Der Lutheraner III (Sep. 5, 1846) 4; (Dec. 14, 1847) 57; Jacobs, op.cit., 406.

23 The Lutheran Observer XV (Sep. 3, 1847) 211; Der Lutheraner IV (Dec. 14, 1847) 57, 58, 59.

Through their patient and sympathetic efforts in the formative period many of the irregularities and congregational difficulties were ironed out and the foundation was laid for a highly integrated and efficiently functioning synod.

Spaeth's estimate of Walther's work as a builder is also applicable to Wyneken who was president of the synod for fourteen years. The commentator said of Walther: "He continued doctrinal discussions at synods and conferences, yes even at congregational meetings, regular parish visitations careful establishment of parochial schools, cooperated, not only toward the creation of a common synodical spirit, but also toward its powerful propagation in new territory. Walther's wise and steady leadership had a magnetic effect, conquering, winning and assimilating antagonistic elements."[24]

24 Neve, op.cit., 273.

CHAPTER IX

THE COHESIVE FORCES IN THE MISSOURI SYNOD

In a cursory study of the Missouri Synod one is impressed by its solidarity and singleness of purpose, something unheard of in the history of the Lutheran Church in America. It is a product of the German religious revival in the first half of the nineteenth century transplanted to the United States, where it imbibed rather distinctly American democratic characteristics. The reaction of its leaders against the rationalistic influence of the Age of Enlightenment made for a reversion to the fundamental confessions of sixteenth century Lutheranism, while their religious experience in America and contact with a democratic environment was responsible for a turn in doctrine and polity which differentiated it from its German prototype. In spite of the attacks of a number of the more confessional groups directed against these innovations the theologians of "Missouri" were able to prove to their complete satisfaction that the changes were not only

in harmony with Luther's doctrines but were rooted in the practices of the Apostolic Church. These doctrines have had repercussions in Germany and are at present accepted by the Saxon Free Church, an affiliate of the Missouri Synod.

The one who contributed most toward building the Missouri Synod and casting it in a strongly confessional mold was the Reverend C. F. W. Walther. No sooner than the mantle of leadership was stripped from Stephan, it fell to Walther's lot to guide the Saxon immigrants out of their dilemma into a better understanding of their spiritual heritage, and assist them in reconciling their separation from an orthodox community in Germany with Scriptural doctrines. His scholarly and theological attainments, his deep human sympathy and intelligent grasp of religious and political problems of the day, and his ability as a preacher, pastor, counselor, author and editor won for him the enthusiastic and loyal support of both the clergy and laymen of the Missouri Synod. Due to his abiding influence in the interest of Lutheran orthodoxy his followers have placed him in the front ranks with the really great Lutheran leaders.

The background of Walther's leadership was traceable to his parental and university environment. In his student days at Leipzig he passed through a period of spiritual anguish from

which he eventually found deliverance by a study of the church fathers and the writings of Luther. The ridicule heaped upon him and his fellows by many of the Leipzig students merely confirmed his conviction. The same religious spirit motivated him when he assumed his first pastoral charge in Saxony, to which he was appointed in 1837. His outspoken disapproval of the unionistic and rationalistic trends in the Saxon church incurred the ill will of the church superintendent and of his father, the Reverend Gottlob H. W. Walther.

Realizing that any attempt, at that time, to organize a church independent of the Saxon state church would be fatal he decided to emigrate to America. Here religious conditions among the Lutherans were not very different from those encountered in Germany, except perhaps, that he had no reason to fear governmental interference. Like in Saxony he held himself aloof from unionistic and non-confessional practices, and set out to awaken a confessional consciousness and gather about him those of like mind. It was through his efforts that the historical creeds of the church were made the fundamental law of the Missouri Synod.

Having set as his goal a church union based upon answerving acceptance of the Lutheran symbols, Walther moved methodically to realize his hopes. Der Lutheraner succeeded beyond his fondest expectations in laying the foundation for an intelligent understanding of fundamental doctrines among the

Lutheran laymen. Throughout the many years of his editorial career he held steadfastly to the original purpose of Der Lutheraner, dedicated to the confessional interest of the common man. By scanning its columns from year to year one is inadvertedly impressed with its methodical development of a religious literature looking toward a spiritual growth and understanding. As soon as Der Lutheraner was made the official organ of the Missouri Synod in 1847, its scope was extended toward consolidating the synod into a highly unified body.

In the course of the heated doctrinal disputes waged between "Missouri" and other Lutheran factions Walther found it expedient to have the synod publish in 1855, a purely theological journal Lehre und Wehre. This publication, edited by Walther and intended for the pastors of "Missouri", contained dogmatic and theological analyses of basic tenets of the synod and did for the pastors of "Missouri" what Der Lutheraner did for the laymen. Many of the important items that appeared in Lehre und Wehre served as a basis for more detailed discussions at pastoral conferences and synodical conventions at which Walther frequently took an active part in ironing out differences and aided in arriving at a common ground of understanding.

Walther's correspondence which kept him in constant touch with widely scattered sections of the United States and even with Germany, enabled him to sense the religious temper

of quite divergent groups. Pastors, congregations, and laymen sought his personal advice in many of their perplexing church problems. Before the Missouri Synod was founded Walther's correspondence was already quite extensive. In speaking of his correspondence he said to Brohm in New York: "From time to time I must write to pastors Keyl, Löber, Gönner, Wege, Geyer, Schieferdecker, Fürbringer, Sihler, Wyneken, Ernst and many others. Less well known ministers in Ohio and Indiana write concerning matters of vital importance, often laymen ask questions that require immediate answers. A further reason for delay in answering your letter is the fact that I write slowly and am inclined to spend considerable time in reflection before answering weighty questions".[1]

Undoubtedly the most enduring tribute to Walther's influence is to be found in the hundreds of divinity students graduated from Concordia Seminary at St. Louis between 1850 and 1887. In 1861 the practical seminary at Ft. Wayne, founded by Löhe in Germany to meet the emergency demand for Lutheran pastors was removed to St.Louis, a move that made for greater doctrinal unity and solidarity. Through Walther's guidance the students had instilled into them the one fundamental objective, the stewardship of the Word and pure doctrine, (Das Wort, und die reine Lehre). As a group they consistently refused to mix politics with their calling, and a political pastor was to them

1 Walther's Briefe I:20.

an anomaly. In the years of his professorship Walther did more than any other person to mold the future ministers of "Missouri", for to him they looked for spiritual guidance and received from him that inspiration to follow the trail blazed by him. Today almost a half century after his death the Missouri Synod is a glowing tribute to Walther who occupies a place in the synod second only to the great reformer, Martin Luther.

The remarkable achievements of Walther would never have been possible had it not been for the able corps of assistants, whose loyalty, devotion and willingness to work with him Walther fully recognized. He could count on such persons as Brohm, Wyneken, Sihler, Löber and others to write articles for Der Lutheraner and Lehre und Wehre and feel they would make a creditable showing. After 1850, when Walther relinquished the presidency of the Missouri Synod and Wyneken was chosen to that office, he built on the foundation laid by his predecessor looking toward doctrinal unity and the stewardship of "das Wort und die reine Lehre". Walther and his colleagues met the attacks from Lutheran quarters at home and abroad and through the defense of "Missouri" doctrines they awakened within their lay and clerical ranks a confidence in the truth of their convictions almost unheard of in Protestant ranks.

The same determination to guard against doctrinal dissent was clearly demonstrated in the synodical and congregational constitutions as outlined by Walther. In both documents

certain tenets were subscribed to as immutable principles. As far as these were concerned the synod as well as its constituent congregations subscribed to them without reserve and refused to give ground in any particular for the sake of numerical growth. Any organized synod that applied for fellowship was recognized only after accepting "Missouri's" doctrinal precepts set forth in the synodical constitution.

Much of the time of the synodical conventions was devoted to vital and timely doctrinal discussions to arrive at a common understanding on controversial questions. To meet general evils and doctrinal threats that seemed to menace the church the synod recommended the policy to be pursued by the ministers and the editorial staff of its periodicals to counteract dangerous trends.[2] Unlike the General Synod of the "American Lutheran" Church the delegates of "Missouri" believed that a thorough presentation of doctrinal questions would make for unity rather than disintegration. "Missouri" refused to recognize a common ground upon which Protestants of divergent creeds and dogma could unite.

To guarantee greater uniformity in doctrine and practice and pastoral adherence to his spiritual functions the constitution of the synod provided for a careful congregational inspection at least once in three years. The presidents or visitors

2 Der Lutheraner II (Sep. 5, 1846), 4.

of the respective district synods were expected to report to the synod on the spiritual status of their respective congregations. To strengthen the bond of union between the various synodical divisions and the General Synod (Allegemeine Synode) the new constitution of 1863, defined more specifically the duties of the president of the general body. He was entrusted with the supervision over all other synodical officers, presidents of district synods and over the professors and the general affairs of colleges and seminaries. He was also expected to attend all assemblies of district synods, participate in doctrinal discussions and serve in the capacity of counsilor and advisor. It is evident that in spite of the seeming loose confederation of congregations into a synodical whole fundamental safeguards were erected looking toward confessional unity extending from the parochial school through the congregations to the district synod and on to the general body.

In spite of the requirement of the visitor to audit and criticise sermons, attend congregational meetings, see that church discipline was observed and liturgical service rightly conducted the congregation was not deprived of its autonomy. Thanks to Walther and Wyneken, the first presidents of the synod, the vivid memory of a Stephan and the dictatorial and hierarchical procedure of Grabau, president of the Buffalo Synod, a system was developed making for a broader understanding and mutual cooperation between ministers, congregations and synodical officers.

The powers of the presidents or inspectors were purely advisory and the congregations and pastors were at liberty at any time to present their grievances on the floor of the synodical convention for adjudication. All fear of the evolution of a German consistorial or even episcopalian system was safely dispelled from the Missouri Synod.[3]

The importance of the parochial day school as a means of keeping alive and planting a deep Lutheran consciousness in America can not be overemphasized in the history of the Missouri Synod. Long before such men as Wyneken, Walther, and Sihler thought of gathering those of like mind with them into a synodical organization, they looked to the Christian day school as a vital part of their missionary work in the United States. One of the first tasks they performed after establishing themselves in a community was to open a Lutheran day school. No matter how arduous the pastoral duties the school was to them a matter of vital concern. They were convinced that through it more than any other agency could the basic principles of confessional Lutheranism and doctrinal unity be firmly rooted in American soil.

Through the use of the German language as a vehicle for religious expression they believed the children would come into complete possession of Germany's greatest contribution to posterity, religious and secular literature. Through the schools non-Lutheran parents of German extraction were frequently brought

3 The Lutheran Observer XV (Sep. 3, 1847), 211.

into church membership. In as much as the schools made possible a continuation of German religious services the close bond between the new and the old immigrant was retained, and the desire of many a German to give to his children a German education and to hear the German language spoken made for an increased attendance in school and church. This was particularly true in the large cities where the majority of the children enrolled in the parochial school were of non-Lutheran parentage and the church attendance was made up of many strangers.[4]

An important factor contributing to the solidarity and growth of the Missouri Synod and setting it apart from the other Lutheran groups has been its determination to maintain a parochial school system, in which religious instruction and the German language have been given important places in the curriculum. Through the school the German language was retained much longer as the medium of religious worship than would ordinarily have been possible, and the churches of the Missouri Synod afforded many a new German immigrant an opportunity of wholesome fellowship, so valuable in a strange land. Through the German instruction received in the parochial schools the descendents of immigrants of the first half of the nineteenth century were able to fraternize with the immigrants who arrived in the latter decades of the century. Even today when the English language is

4 Above 87, 98; Walther's Briefe I:61; Der Lutheraner XI (Oct. 24, 1854) 34, 35.

more widely used in religious services, the German periodicals published by the synod are as widely read as the English publications of similar character, and many a descendent of immigrant stock longs once again to hear a German service and join in the singing of hymns he learned in the parochial school. Failure on the part of the "American Lutheran" synods of the East and the later Scandinavian Lutherans to preserve their native language retarded the growth in church membership to which immigration justly entitled them and deprived them of a group consciousness so characteristic of "Missouri".

Before the articles of the synodical constitution had been drafted there could have been no doubt in the mind of even a casual observer that the parochial school would hold a prominent place in the Missouri Synod. For membership in the synod the constitution made it mandatory for the congregation to support a Lutheran day school, in which a thorough religious education was made an important part of the course of study. One of the paragraphs of the constitution obligated the synod to "erect, maintain and control institutions for training pastors and teachers for the future". The task of giving teachers training was provided for in conjunction with the education of divinity students until a separate teachers college was opened at Addison, Illinois, in the winter of 1864.[5] In fact for many

5 Der Lutheraner II (Sep. 5, 1846) 5; Ebenezer, op.cit., 28, 211-219 passim.

years of the synod's existence the number of pastors teaching in congregational schools in conjunction with their other duties far outnumbered the men engaged in teaching alone.

Economic and spiritual interdependence were inevitable consequences of "Missouri's" aloofness from all forms of church fellowship contrary to their confessional convictions, and of a determination to harmonize their every day life with their religious philosophy. The numerous attacks upon their doctrinal exclusiveness by Lutheran and non-Lutheran alike merely intensified the existing group consciousness and affirmed the prevailing confessional convictions. Walther and his followers believed the attacks blessings in disguise, for to meet them they were obliged to resort to a more intensive study of the Lutheran doctrines. To be persecuted for the sake of their religion was to them positive evidence of divine approval and that they were following in the footsteps of their "Master".[6]

The bonds of economic and confessional interdependence of the "Old Lutherans" extended beyond the bounds of the United States into Germany. Once the confessional Lutherans of Germany had awakened to the needs of their immigrant brethren in America it was but natural for them to cooperate with those of like mind in America. The aggressive religious policy of the Saxon Lutherans as set forth in Der Lutheraner turned the attention of the

6 Walther's Briefe I: 25-35 passim, 161.

several representatives of German Lutheran missionary endeavor in America toward the Saxons, a fellowship which led to the founding of the Missouri Synod, and the temporary concentration of German missionary and philanthropic endeavor in the Missouri Synod. The union thus consummated in America continued in spite of Löhe's break with Missouri in 1852, which resulted from doctrinal differences pertaining to the question of the church and the pastoral office (Kirche u. Amt). By this time the Missouri Synod was fairly self-sufficient and able to weather the break without any serious consequences.

Realizing the eventual effect of such a rupture with one of the prominent Lutheran leaders in Germany, and the danger of repercussions in America, the leaders of "Missouri" proceeded to establish new connections in Germany. In 1861, the Reverend Friedrich Brunn, who had broken with the state church of Saxony, had embraced the "Missouri" doctrines and later was instrumental in organizing the Free Church of Saxony and Other States, united the efforts of the "Old Lutherans" of Saxony and a number of the northern states of Germany back of the Missouri Synod. With finances no longer a serious handicap the synod contributed liberally toward the support of Brunn's preparatory school, from which young men were sent to Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, to complete their theological education. Through the enthusiastic efforts of their patron the Missouri Synod was fortunate in securing

a liberal supply of divinity students from Germany in the very years when American manhood was drafted for war and later reconstruction. The bond of intimate doctrinal fellowship established in Germany and similar connections in other European countries and many parts of the world, Australia, New Zealand, South America and widely scattered foreign mission fields have given "Missouri" a feeling of solidarity and universality unsurpassed by any other Lutheran body.[7]

When Walther and his associates were laboring indefatigably to lay the foundation for confessional Lutheranism they could count on the financial support of the more prosperous congregations to assist in advancing their program. Besides bearing the major part of the financial burdens of the seminaries at Ft. Wayne and St. Louis, in the formative years of the synod, they assisted many communities unable to build churches and pay their pastors and contributed in other ways to meet the immediate needs of struggling congregations. There are, no doubt, comparatively few congregations in the Missouri Synod that have not at some time received some form of assistance from sister churches. In recent years considerable progress has been made in building up an extension fund for church expansion, and in 1921, approximately five hundred received assistance from this fund.[8]

7 Der Lutheraner XVII (Feb. 5, 1861) 103; (Apr. 30, 1861) 151; (June 11, 1861) 171, 172; XVIII (Apr. 16, 1862) 141, 142; XIX (Sep. 3, 1862) 51; XX (Nov. 15, 1862) 47; XXI (Jan. 15, 1862) 77; Walther's Briefe I:159; Ebenezer, op.cit., 466-481 passim.

8 Der Lutheraner IV (Mar. 21, 1848) 120; VI (Jan. 11, 1850) 168; (June 25, 1850) 192; (July 23, 1850) 192; (Aug. 19, 1850) 207; VII (Feb. 18, 1851) 104; (June 10, 1851) 168; VIII (Mar. 1, 1852) 88; Ebenezer, op.cit., 389, 390.

By glancing through the files of Der Lutheraner from year to year the increase in numbers and amounts of gifts acknowledged is quite apparent, and the ready response to requests for voluntary contributions within the synod must have been a source of considerable satisfaction to Walther and his followers. In the course of the eighty-seven years of "Missouri's" existence the synods economic assets have showed the same remarkable growth as its numerical strength and every congregation regardless of its contributions toward the structure and of its size has an equal part with all other member congregations in administering the affairs of the entire organization.

In evaluating the cohesive forces of the Missouri Synod one is impressed with the fact that the economic bonds are as vital a part in "Missouri's" stability as the doctrinal forces. Throughout the synod's history its leaders have combined with their confessional policy a practical business sense and vision of future possibilities. The status of the synod enabled them to take advantage of new opportunities and when other Lutheran synods in the United States were hard pressed devising ways and means for extension "Missouri" was usually on the scene set for action.

CHAPTER X

THE CONFLICT WITHIN "OLD LUTHERAN" RANKS

"BUFFALO" vs. "MISSOURI"

The common adherence of the "Old Lutherans" of America to the symbols of the church were by no means an effective deterrent to doctrinal controversies. Some years before the Saxons had founded the Missouri Synod and the Prussians the Buffalo Synod these two fairly well organized Lutheran immigrant groups became involved in heated controversies over the external structure of the church and the spiritual status of the minister and the congregation. The discussion that began in 1840, only one year after they had settled in America, increased in intensity and acrimony until the latter part of the fifties. Unlike "Missouri" the Buffalo Synod had not adjusted itself to American democratic institutions but adhered rigidly to the hierarchical and paternalistic practices in vogue in Germany. In polity the two synods were the very antithesis of each other.

The personnel of leadership of "Buffalo" and "Missouri" differed as greatly as did their doctrinal tenets. Grabau possessed dictatorial characteristics much like those of Stephan, the early Saxon leader. He asserted a spiritual and temporal authority over the "Old Lutherans" of America characteristic of a medieval Hildebrand. Upon the slightest provocation he resorted to excommunication and publicly condemned all Lutherans who did not agree with him in matters of doctrine and pastoral procedure. A correspondent to the Evangelische Kirchenzeitung observed, that "the only pastor of the local congregation at Buffalo, Grabau, wields an iron hand over his congregation, and has imposed upon them a more severe yoke than the papal. The fanaticism with which he recently condemned A. H. Franke to hell, ...his severity and craving for authority has produced such a ferment, that it has caused a separation of a part of his congregation".[1] Walther, the leader of "Missouri", was human to the core, possessing by temperament and experience a modesty and kindly concern for his comrades and all who came in contact with him which attracted rather than repelled. It was rather unfortunate that a man of Grabau's temperament dominated the affairs of the Buffalo Synod at a time when so much

1 Evangelische Kirchenzeitung XXXVIII (Feb. 4, 1846), 94.

depended upon sympathy and patience. With a man of Walther's or Wyneken's temperament at the head of the Buffalo Synod, its history would have been quite different.

At the time of emigration the leaders of "Missouri" and "Buffalo" advanced similar doctrines. Not only did they accept the Lutheran confessions without qualifications, but they attached considerable spiritual importance to the ministerial office, for Grabau as well as Stephan insisted that the members of his flock, individually as well as collectively, were bound to render obedience to him in all things not contrary to the Word of God. Both regarded themselves judges in matters effecting them and the congregation. Fearing that the absence of governmental supervision over the church in America might undermine church discipline, both assumed a more arbitrary program than was possible in Germany. Neither seemed to realize that some form of restraint was as essential against an ambitious leader as a rebellious parishioner. Fortunately the Saxons (Missouri) succeeded in escaping the fatal consequences of the high churchism of their leader, Stephan, and were able to adapt their church polity to a democratic American environment by bringing to the fore the doctrine of the universal priesthood of the believer.[2]

2 Above Ch. VI; Deinzer, op.cit., III; 84; Neve, op.cit., 282-3.

In the perplexing months in which Walther was searching for a way out of the dilemma in which Stephan had left the Saxons in 1840, a copy of Grabau's "Pastoral Letter" (Hirtenbrief), addressed to his brethren in New-York, Wisconsin, and Canada, was received by the Saxons. This letter, calling for the opinion of the Saxons on certain fundamental questions, set forth doctrines similar to those held by Stephan, teachings which Walther and his associates now feared even more than the democratic trends current in the United States. Owing to the magnitude of the spiritual problem confronting them the Saxons, Walther, Löber, Kyle and Gruber, witheld the answer to Grabau's Pastoral Letter until 1843. In their answer, written by Löber, they presented their objections and expressed a readiness publicly to discuss the question with Grabau and his followers.[3]

Grabau insisted, "that the Holy Christian Church was a visible church, really and truly the visible congregation of believers among whom the Word of God was taught in its purity and the Sacraments administered according to Christian institutions".[4] He further asserted that the only way in which

3 Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastor Grabau. Nebst den zwischen ihm und mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften. (St. Louis, 1847); Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853), 418; Der Lutheraner IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 1, 2, 3.

4 Neve, op.cit., 282.

one might be saved was by membership in an orthodox communion, and that such a member would be obliged to flee all meetings of heretics and schismatics. "Sectarians" whose souls had been awakened by reading the Scriptures, had by other means grasped the pure Christian doctrines, and had therefore made their spiritual exodus, would in time be brought into the visible church of God, "the Lutheran Church that emigrated from Prussia".[4] "Missouri's" doctrine of the church invisible to be found wherever the fundamental teachings of Christ were retained was declared a heresy by Grabau.[5]

Having raised "the Lutheran Church that emigrated from Prussia" to a place of eminence the "Pastoral Letter" proceeded to elevate the office of the ministry to a position unheard of since the Middle Ages. The properly ordained minister he declared to be the sole guardian and interpreter of God's will. For admission to the divine office the candidate was to pass through a period of training and probation under the supervision of an ordained pastor, and after a most carefully directed apprenticeship and a properly executed call the novice was to be ordained. In calling a minister a congregation could not act upon its own initiative but must follow the advice

[4]The name given the Lutheran group which followed Grabau to America.

5 Der Hirtenbrief, op.cit; F. Lochner, (editor) Notwehrblatt (1847-1852), 116-120, passim; Der Lutheraner IX (Nov. 23, 1852); (Jan. 18, Feb. 1, Mar. 1, Mar. 29, July 19, 1853); Ebenezer, op.cit., 126-129, passim; Neve, op.cit., 281; Wolf, op.cit., 412.

of a regularly ordained minister.[6]

According to Grabau, spiritual functions, the Sacraments and the rite of absolving of sin, were valid in the sight of God only when exercised by a properly ordained pastor. By virtue of his office the pastor was entitled to obedience in all things not contrary to Biblical doctrines. Even though his commands might seem foolish and ill advised implicit obedience was required on pain of excommunication should his mandates be disregarded.[7]

The only recourse a parishioner or congregation had against the arbitrary mandates of their pastor was the right to submit their grievances to a church council exclusively made up of ministers. The authority of such a body was final and the parties involved were bound by the council's decision and were to repent of their sin even though they were not conscious of a wrong act. Should any member of the congregation still have scruples regarding the validity of the action taken, he was told to find comfort in the fact that the minister was divinely ordained and therefore by submitting to what seemed an injustice to him he was merely bowing to a divine command.[8]

6 Der Hirtenbrief, op.cit., 1840, 12-14; Der Lutheraner VIII (Feb. 18, 1852); IX (Jan. 21, Aug. 2, 1853); Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 418, 419; Walther's Briefe I:12; Ebenezer, op.cit., 113-123, passim.

7 Der Hirtenbrief, op.cit., 1840; Deinzer, op.cit., 84; Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 418, 419.

8 Der Hirtenbrief, op.cit., 1840; F. Lochner, op.cit. (1847-1852), 94, 109, 110; Ebenezer, op.cit., 124-129, passim; Deinzer, op.cit., 84.

In contrast to Grabau's theology, "Missouri" occupied an opposing doctrinal position. The Saxons had reached the conclusion that "every Christian as a priest of God has; (a) the office of theWord, (b) to baptize, (c) to bless and consecrate the holy bread and wine, (d) to retain sins and remit them, (e) to offer sacrifices, (f) to pray for others, (g) to pass judgment on doctrines. But as all Christians can not simultaneously discharge these offices God has commanded that the many spiritual priests choose one among them as pastor, who as a representative of the whole congregation, performs the ministerial rites".[9] Walther taught, that through the call the ministerial office vested in the Christian church was transferred to the pastor, and that a call from a congregation without the advice of a duly ordained clergyman was valid in the sight of God. Should a congregation find one in its own midst competent to administer the pastoral office, it might extend a call to that person, who in turn would then be vested with all of the spiritual functions of a regularly ordained pastor though a formal laying on of hands had not occurred. Walther declared that ordination was a wise Apostolic custom and a public confirmation of the divine office through prayer and laying on of hands.

9 Neve, op.cit., 282, 283; Der Hirtenbrief, op.cit., 1840; Ebenezer, op.cit., 140-160, passim.

(Es ist eine heilsame Apostolische kirchliche Ordnung zur öffentlichen, feierlichen Bestätigung der Vokation mit Gebet und Handauflegung).[10]

These doctrinal disagreements between "Missouri" and "Buffalo" were the immediate occasion for the acrimonious controversy which continued for a quarter century and reached its height in the fifties. Both parties were so confident of their convictions that compromise was out of the question. The leaders of "Missouri" avoided closing the issue and invited the opposition to debate the question publicly, a proposal consistently evaded by Grabau. He persisted in putting obstacles in the way of a disputation by demanding that "Missouri" subscribe to preliminary agreements which were tantamount to a recognition of "Buffalo's" doctrines. As time elapsed and the disaffection in Grabau's ranks made for a drift to "Missouri", he cast aside all restraint and asserted a spiritual and temporal primacy which put to shame even a medieval pope.[11]

In response to Löber's letter in 1844, stating the Saxon's objections to the respective articles in the Pastoral Letter, Grabau accused them of seventeen fundamental errors,

10 Ebenezer, op.cit., 134, 135, 136; Neve, op.cit., 282, 283; Der Lutheraner VIII (Feb. 17, Mar. 2, May 25, 1852); Walther's Briefe I:12; Deinzer, op.cit. III:84.

11 Der Lutheraner IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 1-3; Walther's Briefe I:18.

and with an air of divine authority he demanded a recantation.[12] His domineering attitude was all too evident in the concluding paragraph of a letter to the Reverend Theodore Brohm, a Saxon who had received his appointment at New York through Grabau's recommendation: "Finally, I inform you that I cannot recognize you as Lutheran pastors who earnestly adhere to God's Word and the Symbolical Books of the church, and confess the same, and that the spirit which pervades your criticism of my Pastoral letter, is a lax, unchurchly spirit. May the Lord again have mercy upon you, as he did at the first, when he delivered you from Stephanism; for it is not to be concealed that you are now sunk in an unchurchly compromising liberalism, which is one of the extremes of Stephanism; and this is the reason that your unchurchly criticism is so greatly approved by our sectaries. For the injury that you are thus doing, you will have to answer, if you do not again, in sincere penitence, acknowledge your errors. I must therefore as it appears, have to repeat in public contest with you, much that was established in our conflict with the unchurchly liberalism of the Union in Prussia."[13]

When in 1845, Grabau and four of his colleagues organized the Synod of the Lutheran Church which emigrated from

12 Der Lutheraner IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 1-3; Der Hirtenbrief, op. cit., 37, 88-90.
13 Quoted in The Evangelical Review (Jan. 1853) 419-20.

Prussia, the so called "Buffalo Synod" at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the doctrinal controversy with Walther and his Saxon associates was made a synodical issue. Walther, in response to a request from his fellows, went to Milwaukee to discuss the differences with Grabau, but upon a refusal to recant the critic of the Pastoral Letter before appearing on the floor of the convention, he was denied the privilege of defending the Saxon tenets. The "Buffalo Synod" then proceeded with an attitude of authority rivaling that of the great church councils, to condemn the doctrines and acts of their opponents and admonish them to renounce their false views and mend their ways. Time and again the Saxons offered to debate the conflicting questions with "Buffalo", but invariably Grabau interposed the usual obstacle.[14]

In this competition for spiritual leadership among the "Old Lutherans" of America nothing could have been more disconcerting to Grabau than to see the representatives of Löhe join ranks with the Saxons in founding the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, in 1847. Their union strengthened the Saxon's position in areas in which Grabau had a firm footing, and brought to "Missouri's" support the resources of the Löhe foundation. From 1847 on the conflict was between "Missouri" and "Buffalo" with "Missouri" having

14 Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 423; Hotwehrblatt (Sep. 1857) 41; Gunther, op.cit., 59; Der Lutheraner IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 3; Der Hirtenbriefe, op.cit., 96; Der Lutheraner XII (Sep. 23, 1856)

a decided advantage. For they were able to send pastors into Lutheran communities where the arbitrary and, at times, intolerable declaration of the spiritual ban brought consternation and confusion.[15] Without a doubt, Graban must have realized, that his only hope of checking "Missouri's" progress was to undermine the sympathetic and cooperative support they were getting from Germany. Finally the extensive and adverse publicity this controversy gave "Missouri" at home and abroad prompted the synod in 1848, to publish all the details of the polemic correspondence.[16]

Löhe and many of the prominent clergy of Germany, who were none too kindly disposed toward liberal trends in church government, showed signs of breaking with "Missouri". In fact, the situation in Germany had taken such a decided turn, that the "Missouri Synod" decided to send Walther and Wyneken to Germany to plead their cause, as long as the doctrine of the church and the ministry was still an open question with them. In their travels throughout northern Germany in the fall of 1851, the two delegates found that the decided reaction within church circles against political revolutions had prejudiced the clergy against the liberal polity of "Missouri". Accustomed to a consistorial form of church

15 Der Lutheraner VII (Dec. 24, 1850) 71; IX, (Aug. 31, 1852) 1-3; Walther's Briefe I:36; Notwehrblatt (Sep. 1857) 41; The Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 422.

16 Der Hirtenbrief 93-98; Der Lutheraner VIII (Feb. 19, 1852) 100; (Mar. 16, 1852) 115; Synodalbericht V (1851) 8; Walther's Briefe I, op.cit., 75, 89, 90; The Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 424.

government, coupled with the reactionary trends of the time, it was but natural for the German divines to be kindly disposed toward Grabau's supervisory system as an effective method of maintaining church discipline in an atmosphere of complete separation of church and state.[17] Had it not been for the extremes to which Grabau was ready to go in achieving his end it is quite probable that he might have displaced "Missouri" in Germany.

Having failed to convince Löhe, that their doctrine was based upon sound Lutheran and Biblical principles, Walther and Wyneken, nevertheless, returned to America confident of Löhe's cooperation.[18] These hopes, however, were dispelled after Grabau's and von Rohr's conference with him in 1853. Fortunately for "Missouri", Löhe was even less inclined toward Grabau, for he found certain of the latters doctrines harmonized more with those of "Missouri than with Löhe's. He even went so far as to urge upon Grabau a more conciliatory attitude toward "Missouri". Due to the existing circumstances and Löhe's insistance that Lutheranism was a forward and evolutionary movement rather than a fixed or static form of worship as advocated by "Buffalo" and "Missouri", he decided to continue his endeavo in America independent of either.[19]

17 Synodalbericht V (1851) 8-11; Der Lutheraner VIII (Sep. 15, 1851) 16; (Feb. 19, 1852) 99-101; (Mar. 16, 1852) 113, 114; Walther's Briefe I:24; Deinzer, op.cit., III:93; Jacobs, op.cit., 407.

18 Der Lutheraner VIII (Mar. 16, 1852) 114, 115; (May 25, 1852 155.

19 Deinzer, op.cit., III:86,87,98; Gunther, op.cit., 93; Der Lutheraner VIII (Mar. 16, 1852) 115.

Though Walther's and Wyneken's sojourn in Germany failed to restore Löhe's confidence in "Missouri", it did help to dispel much of the prejudice within clerical and official circles where Walther and Wyneken were well known. By debate, and formal and informal conferences the "Missouri" delegates were able to clarify their position within their own minds and in those of many prominent theologians. They succeeded, at least temporarily, in rekindling in official and clerical circles an interest in "Missouri's" work among the German immigrants.[20] Before leaving Germany Walther was requested to draw up a statement about the "Missouri-Buffalo" controversy, which was to be given publicity in Germany.[21]

In the course of his debates and his research at Erlangen, Walther came to certain doctrinal conclusions which he formulated in his thesis, Kirche und Amt (Church and Ministry). This book was a real contribution to American theological literature. While written by a theologian educated in Germany and first printed in that country in 1852, its contents shows a decided American trend pointing the way for the adaptation of Lutheran church polity to the political theory of a free church in a free state.[22]

20 Der Lutheraner VII (Oct. 20, 1850) 40; VIII (Mar. 2, 1852) 105, 108; (June 8, 1852) 163, 164.
21 Der Lutheraner VIII (Feb. 17, 1852) 99.
22 C. F. W. Walther's Kirche und Amt; The Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 424-429.

In Kirche und Amt Walther developed more fully the doctrinal propositions which had their inception in the break with Stephan and his hierarchical claims. In it Walther elucidated his tenets and substantiated them by citations from the Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers and the theologians of the Lutheran Church. The doctrinal controversy with Grabau, whose views concerning the ministry and the church were similar to Stephans, and the lengthy polemical correspondence between the two factions made it incumbent upon Walther to substantiate his proposition by a careful theological research.[23]

In the years following Walther's return from Germany conditions developed which shattered all hope for a compromise between the two leading Lutheran immigrant groups in America. As far as "Missouri" was concerned they were more confident than ever of the correctness of their doctrinal position, for the theory of the church and the ministry had practically ceased to be an open question. The tour of Germany by Grabau and von Rohr in 1853, and the conference with Löhe had failed to turn German support to "Buffalo", but convinced Löhe of the advisability of continuing his efforts in America independent of either group.[24] Relations between "Buffalo" and "Missouri" were further complicated by the advance of Walther's colleagues into Lutheran sections claimed by Grabau. His tour of northern

23 For a treatment of Walther's doctrine see Ebenezer, 140-160, and above pp. 112-114 and 175.
24 Deinzer, op.cit., III:98.

Germany was largely motivated by a desire to induce Lutherans to emigrate to Wisconsin where they might improve their religious and economic status.[25] Many of the new immigrants, to Grabau's chagrin, were no more amenable to his dictates than those already indoctrinated with American democratic principles. Like members of his first immigrant party of 1839, they looked to "Missouri" when "Buffalo's" disciplinary policy became disconcerting to their spiritual peace of mind.

Grabau's personal interest and efforts in behalf of Lutheran colonization in America merited far greater success for him as an organizer and builder of a Lutheran synod in the West. From the first he lacked pastors who would look to him for guidance to send into Lutheran communities and therefore he was at first inclined to turn to the Saxons in Missouri. Until the forties such an arrangement seemed quite reasonable, for both parties were agreed on fundamentals. But no sooner had the Saxons broken with Stephan's hierarchical concept, they seemed to act as a unit in following the trends outlined by Walther. Brohm at New York, owed his appointment to the recommendation of Grabau. E. M. Bürger, another Saxon colleague of Walther, instead of returning to Germany at the time of the religious confusion had accepted the pastorate of a Lutheran faction which had seceded from Grabau.[26] These and many of the lay and clerical followers of Grabau found his dictatorial attitude intolerable.

25 Campbell, op. cit., III:47, 48.
26 The Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 428; Der Lutheraner IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 2; Walther's Briefe I: 8, 9.

In the quarter century following Grabau's settlement at Buffalo, New York, the spiritual atmosphere in the congregations affiliated with him was charged with discontent. Persons aggrieved by his ban and unwilling to submit to his disciplinary measures turned to "Missouri" for relief. The disaffection became more formidable after 1848, when in self defense "Missouri" decided to publish the correspondence between the two factions concerning the church and the ministry. In this treatise and in subsequent articles which appeared in Der Lutheraner a distinction was made between what "Missouri" regarded a just and an unjust ban. They declared themselves ready to recognize excommunication which conformed to their doctrine whether it be proclaimed by the Buffalo Synod or even the Catholic Church, but they refused to accept as valid steps taken by others contrary to their teachings and gladly espoused the cause of offended parties.[27] It is, therefore, no small wonder that in the course of this bitter conflict individuals, groups, entire "Buffalo" congregations, and pastors found their way into the Missouri Synod. Many strategic centers held by "Buffalo" became strongholds of "Missouri". Promising and later prosperous congregations at Buffalo, New York, at Milwaukee, Watertown and Freistadt, Wisconsin, at

27 Synodalbericht V (1851) 22, 23, 26, 34; Der Lutheraner VII (Dec. 24, 1850) 71; VIII (Feb. 17, 1852) 102; (June 8, 1852) 165, 166, 167; (June 22, 1852) 169.

Detroit, Michigan, and other centers of "Buffalo" strength contributed to "Missouri's" growth and expansion.[28]

Grabau could hardly be expected idly to stand by and see the results of his efforts accrue to the advantage of an opposing synod. From year to year through his semi-monthly the Informatorium and from "Buffalo's" pulpits Walther and his colleagues were proscribed as, " 'Missouri', (a name given them by Grabau), heretics and false prophets preaching to mobs (Rotten) assembled in 'Missouri' churches". Pastors of "Missouri" were reviled as "preachers to mobs, harborers of mobs" and the Synod was declared an "Ahab's Synod, a synod of abomination and a Temple of Babel". Grabau and his colleagues were denounced as papists and tyrants.[29]

Nothing could have been more annoying to the "Old Lutherans" of America and their co-religionists in Germany than the tense feud between rival factions, each claiming to be the true exponent of sixteenth century Lutheranism. The seriousness of the situation must have been evident to all

28 Notwehrblatt (June 1857) 14, 19, 21; Der Lutheraner VII (Dec. 24, 1850) 7; IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 1, 2, 3, XVI (Dec. 27, 1859) 79; XXI (Jan. 15, 1865) 79; (Feb. 1, 1865) 83; Walther's Briefe I: 36, 57.

29 Der Lutheraner VIII (Nov. 25, Dec. 9, 1850); (Jan. 20, Mar. 16, May 25, June 22, Aug. 2, 1852); IX (Aug. 31, Nov. 23, 1852); Ebenezer, op.cit., 125; Notwehrblatt (May and June 1857); Walther's Briefe I:36, 96; Synodalbericht IV (1850); V (1851); The Evangelical Review IV (Jan. 1853) 423, 424.

concerned. For Walther and his associates were not long in realizing that the rank and file of the lay subscribers to Der Lutheraner were growing weary of theological discussions of no particular interest to them. In response to this reaction Walther concluded again to how close to his old objective by rededicating Der Lutheraner to the spiritual interests of the layman. To meet the direct attacks of Grabau's Informatorium, "Missouri" decided to publish the Notwehrblatt (Leaflet in Self Defense), and to keep vital theological questions before the ministry, a monthly theological journal Lehre und Wehre was published beginning January 1855.[30] Grabau's polemical journal fared far worse than Der Lutheraner, for its publication had to be restricted and at times suspended because of a shortage of subscribers and of adequate financial support.[31] By the closing years of the fifties ~~the~~ much of "Missouri's" journalistic activity was concentrated upon Germany. Articles intended for the American public were sent to Germany for publication to counteract Grabau's criticism.[32]

The maintenance of the bond of spiritual fellowship and cooperation in Germany was a matter of vital concern to the Missouri Synod. Though the synod had prospered in this world's goods and was no longer dependent upon financial support from

30 Der Lutheraner IX (Aug. 31, 1852) 1; Walther's Briefe I:104; Gunther, op.cit., 96.
31 Der Lutheraner, IX (Jan. 4, 1853) 72; XV (Jan. 11, 1859) 87.
32 Walther's Briefe I:90, 104.

abroad, its educational system was not yet sufficiently developed to lay the groundword for pastoral training as could be done in Germany. By 1860, with war clouds gathering in America the need of men for the mission field in America was more imminent than ever. In that year Walther was advised to go to Europe to secure relief from serious throat trouble and attempt to restore closer relationship with pastors of Germany who were sympathetic toward "Missouri's" doctrines. In Saxony the Reverend Frederich Brunn was found willing to do for "Missouri" what Löhe had done in the past. With liberal financial assistance by the Missouri Synod Brunn was able to do even more than Löhe had in sending preachers and teachers to America ready to enter into the service of the Lutheran Church.[33]

Following the restoration of German cooperative endeavor in 1861, the Missouri Synod was in a position to extend more forcibly than ever her policy of expansion. No Lutheran synod in America was able to match its strength with "Missouri" or escape the inroads made into new settlements by its advanced guards, the home missionaries. Besides its aggressive and enthusiastic corps of preachers the synod could boast of a loyal band of laymen ready liberally to respond to requests for voluntary contributions for church extension. A cursory examination of requests for voluntary gifts and statements of receipts

33 A complete account of this affiliation will be given in the following chapter.

in Der Lutheraner bears silent testamony of the loyalty and self-sacrifice of the lay personnel of the synod.

In the sixties the attacks of Grabau turned from doctrinal questions to attacks upon qualifications of the "Missouri" pastors, and upon the greater expense entailed by membership in the Missouri Synod than in the Buffalo Synod. These, like the doctrinal attacks, reacted as a boomerang upon "Buffalo". By 1866 Grabau's position was sufficiently impaired that his associates were able to force him to agree to a colloquium with the leaders of "Missouri". While Grabau refused to give ground to "Missouri" eleven of his pastors and their congregations seceded from the Buffalo Synod and joined the Missouri Synod confining Grabau almost exclusively to the area around Buffalo.[34]

34 Der Lutheraner XX (May 15, 1864) 140; XXI (Jan. 15, 1865) 77; (Feb. 15, 1865) 92; Ebenezer, op.cit., 150.

CHAPTER XI

THE MISSOURI SYNOD AND ITS GERMAN IMPLICATIONS

Löhe and the Missouri Synod had been drifting apart for some time before the "Buffalo" controversy precipitated a complete separation. Since the founding of the Missouri Synod in 1847, he was unable to reconcile his ideas of church polity with the extremely democratic concept of that body. It must have been quite disconcerting to Löhe to find that his representatives, almost without exception, accepted the "Missouri" doctrine and followed the leadership of Walther and the Saxons, once they had assumed their pastoral duties. By the early fifties Löhe had given up all hopes, that he might have cherished, of ultimately fixing his doctrinal position in the Missouri Synod.

Before the "Missouri" constitution had been submitted to the convention assembled in Chicago the latter part of April 1847, Löhe protested against several of its provisions. In a letter to Brohm he declared himself

opposed to it because certain of its declarations did not agree with Scriptural doctrines, and therefore he agreed to absolve his former students of obedience to him.[1] In his opinion the congregational provisions did not conform to his understanding of the organization of the first Christian church, and felt its democratic principles were more detrimental to the welfare of the church than the paternalistic governmental supervision found in Germany. He believed a more rigid supervisory authority of the president of the synod over the respective pastors was an essential prerequisite for a wholesome system of discipline.[2] To grant the lay delegates at a synodical convention equality with the clerics was not only distasteful to Löhe but contained the seed of radicalism and dissension. While not ready to carry his theory of pastoral power to the extremes of a Grabau, he refused to accept Walther's theory of the universal priesthood of the believer. He attached greater importance to ordination and insisted that the ministerial office had been committed to the church as a whole rather than to the individual Christian.[3]

Both parties stood at opposite poles in their

1 Walther's Briefe I:37; A comment on a statement made in Brohm's letter previous to the formal adoption of the Missouri constitution.
2 Deinzer, op.cit., III:27, 31, 35; Fritchel, op.cit., 81.
3 Deinzer, op.cit., III:79, 82, 90, 91; Neve, op.cit., 292.

interpretation of the place the Reformation occupied in the history of the Christian church. Löhe, and later with him the Iowa Synod declared, the Reformation was a progressive movement, a revolt against finality, that it was an evolutionary movement still in a process of being unfolded, therefore many doctrines were still to be considered open questions and subjects of future logical development. "Missouri", on the contrary considered the Reformation a finality as far as the Biblical teachings were concerned, and its doctrines having been fully elucidated in the confessions and symbols of the Lutheran Church were no longer subjects for an historical analysis and revision. They insisted, the Lutherans were not to interpret the confession in the light of the Bible but to interpret the Bible according to the Confessions.[4] From a letter to the Reverend G. Grossmann, one of the founders of the Iowa Synod, can be gleaned Löhe's position: "To me the Symbolical doctrine does not appear to be complete. If this were the case, it would be difficult for me to understand how two opposing parties could base their assertions upon the same doctrines. After all, the question is not what was said by Luther, the theologians and the symbols, but what does the Bible have to say?....I believe in an evolution of the Lutheran Church".[5]

4 Deinzer, op. cit., 91, 92; Neve, op.cit., 285; Jacobs, op. cit., 408; Der Lutheraner X (Aug. 16, 1853) 193; Gunther, op.cit., 93.

5 Quoted in Deinzer, op.cit., III:91, 92.

With but few exceptions, the representatives trained by Löhe for missionary work in America refused to follow their spiritual father and embraced the more democratic tenets of Walther. The seminary at Ft. Wayne, founded and endowed through Löhe's efforts, was deeded by him to the Missouri Synod. With the exception of a settlement in Michigan and several pastors in the area adjoining Saginaw Bay, his followers, in whom he had pinned his hopes, departed from him and embraced the more "static" Lutheranism of "Missouri" and its liberal congregational and synodical organization. He had reached the conviction by 1851, that only through a concentration of his personal efforts in Michigan could he hope to counteract the doctrines of "Missouri".[6]

In the course of a conversation with Wyneken, president of the Missouri Synod, concerning the financial as well as the library needs of the St. Louis seminary, Löhe emphasized the need of a separate teachers seminary in America. He was willing to endow and finance such an enterprise to be located in Saginaw, Michigan, where it would be welcomed by his friends and supporters in that vicinity. Recalling the loss of his Frankonian colonies at Frankenmuth and Frankenhilf, Michigan, the estrangement of Sihler, and the loss of Ft. Wayne seminary he proposed to retain temporary

6 Deinzer, op.cit., III: 96, 97.

supervision over the seminary and his only remaining colony at Frankenhilf, Michigan. By a careful direction of the seminary and the continuance of a trusteeship over the landed property of Frankenhilf he hoped to counteract the objectionable doctrines of the Missouri Synod.[7]

This proposal contained within itself the germ of its own undoing. The intimate bond of national fellowship between the colonies loyal to "Missouri" and the one loyal to Löhe was indicative of disagreeable relations under the proposed arrangement. The Löhe colony was charged "of submitting to slavish domination and returning to shameful priestly control".[8] When the final break between Löhe and "Missouri" came, Wyneken requested for the sake of peace, that the seminary be removed from Saginaw. When in Michigan on a tour of inspection, in the capacity of president of the Missouri Synod, Wyneken made the appeal to the settlers at Frankenhilf, "Go to Iowa, there we have no congregations",[9] a remark which left the impression that "Missouri" would leave Iowa to Löhe and his followers.[10]

7 Deinzer, op.cit., III:97, 98; Ebenezer, op.cit., 92, 93; Der Lutheraner IX (May 25, 1852) 155; Jacobs, op.cit., 409.
8 Deinzer, op.cit., III:97.
9 Deinzer, op.cit., III:101.
10 Deinzer, op.cit., III:126.

The trek from Michigan in the fall of 1853, led by pastors C. Grossmann and J. Diendörfer, included two students from the Saginaw seminary and families from the Michigan settlements. The immigrants settled in Dubuque, Iowa. On August 24, 1854, four ministers, Grossmann, Diendörfer, S. Fritschel and M. Schüller, founded the Evangelical Synod of Iowa and other States. S. Fritschel, educated at Nürenberg and Neudettelsau, Bavaria, and his brother Gottfried were destined to play an important part in the future history and growth of the Iowa Synod. In 1854, the former was selected professor of theology in the synod's seminary, and his brother Gottfried was appointed to the faculty of the same institution in 1857, a position held by him until 1889.[11]

The sore disappointment and profound sorrow over the loss of the fruits of his labors in America was voiced by Löhe in a letter of August 4, 1853, to his friend Sievers, a "Missouri" pastor of the congregation at Frankenmuth, Michigan: "If you will recall what has happened to my Saginaw colonies from time to time, you will realize how close they have been to my heart and hand. Today my heart does not take leave of them but only my hand....My attitude toward them is the same as it has ever been....You take our people who have emigrated from us, our students whom we have sent, and the money spent to send them,

11 Deinzer, op.cit., III:126,127; Jacobs, op. cit., 408, 409; Ebenezer, op.cit., 161; Mrs. Esther A. Belke, Beginnings of the German Lutheran Churches in Minnesota (U. of Minn. Masters Thesis 1927) 45.

everything, everything you take and we can journey on".[12] Löhe's radical departure from "Missouri's" teachings concerning Chiliasm terminated the cordial relations with Sievers in 1859.[13]

Similar to "Buffalo" and "Missouri" the newly founded Iowa Synod "accepted the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church". As to the doctrine concerning the church and the ministry, "Iowa" drifted from "Missouri" and moved toward Grabau, but declined to go to the extreme of asserting complete jurisdiction of the pastor over his parishoner in all matters not specifically prohibited in the Bible. Neither Grabau or "Missouri" accepted the theory laid down by Löhe and "Iowa", that the Reformation was a progressive and evolutionary movement looking toward a greater completeness.[14] "Iowa" declared, no church could claim to be in possession of the whole truth, as doctrinal completeness was a matter to be projected into the future, and as in the past the Holy Spirit will in the future speak through the church and enlighten it. It refused to lay down the same positive terms upon which church unity might be based as did "Missouri" and "Buffalo", but declared absolute doctrinal unity had never existed in the church and should,

12 Deinzer, op.cit., III:102.
13 Deinzer, op. cit., III:118; Der Lutheraner XI, (May 22, 1855) 156; XV (May 31, 1859) 165.
14 Ebenezer, op.cit., 165.

therefore, not be made a condition of church fellowship.[15] It would seem, the doctrines of the Iowa Synod if carried to their logical conclusion might ultimately make for an understanding with the more conservative "American Lutherans", who in the fifties were showing a decided turn toward the Lutheran confessions.

It was hardly probable that two Lutheran synods, so widely separated in their concept of the Reformation could long escape serious clashes in spite of the, so called, working agreement between them. The objective of the one was diametrically opposed to that of the other. "Iowa", founded and endowed by Löhe, necessarily fell heir to the program that motivated him in founding the teacher's seminary at Saginaw, Michigan. "Its foundation and perpetuation was to serve as a real protest against the intolerance of the Missouri Synod" (Durch ihre Gründung wie durch ihren Fortbestand ein tatsächlicher Protest gegen die Unduldsamkeit der Missouresynode).[16] The policy to be pursued by "Missouri" in its official publication Der Lutheraner was specifically outlined by Walther in the first edition of that periodical. In it he proposed to present the doctrines and history of the Lutheran Church, prove it "the ancient true church of Christ on earth, not merely one of the Christian sects", expose false doctrines and practices of

15 Ebenezer, op.cit., 166; Deinzer, op.cit., III:130.
16 Quoted from Deinzer, op.cit., III:131

those in particular who, in his opinion, were spreading false doctrines in the name of Lutheranism.[17] In Der Lutheraner of November 30, 1844, Walther stated quite clearly his position toward what he believed to be erroneous doctrines. "Whoever accepts his doctrines, faith, and confession to be true, correct, and sure, can not remain in the same stall with others who advance false doctrines or are kindly disposed toward them, nor can he converse on friendly terms with the devil and his knaves. A teacher who is silent in the presence of error and still poses as a true teacher is worse than a sectarian, his hypocrisy does more harm than a heretic, and therefore he is not to be trusted".[18]

The firm doctrinal conviction of the Missouri Synod and its determination to expose what it considered doctrinal error, exposed the Iowa Synod to relentless attack. To accept the Lutheran symbols with reservations deprived it of all claim to the name Lutheran in "Missouri's" estimation. It was accused of being a Chiliastic and a unionistic synod in which "a yes and no theology prevailed". This controversy did not reach serious proportions until in 1867, when an attempt to establish amicable relations failed.[19] The more serious problems of a Civil War and a determination to restore

17 Above 116.
18 Above 127.
19 Deinzer, op.cit., III:132.

"Missouri's" prestige in Germany temporarily submerged the doctrinal conflict. As soon as the war had ended and Lutheran immigrants from Germany and many of the middle Western states poured into Iowa and adjoining agricultural sections, the controversy again burst forth with "Missouri" having a decided advantage. From 1867 to 1875 scenes somewhat similar to those enacted between "Missouri" and "Buffalo" held the "Old Lutheran" stage in the West, finally culminating in some twenty ministers leaving the Iowa Synod and joining either the Missouri or the Wisconsin Synods, affiliated with "Missouri" since 1872. After this "Iowa" beat a tactical retreat by dropping the controversial confessional articles without, however, abandoning the liberal doctrines laid down in the original constitution.[20]

While the number of Löhe representatives at Ft. Wayne had steadily declined since 1850, the enrolment of students through other German agencies had offset this loss. In the first nine years of its existence, 1846 to 1855, ninety-seven students had been admitted to the seminary, seventy-two of these had either entered the ministry or become parochial school teachers.[21] Sihler, Director of the Ft. Wayne seminary, estimated that approximately one third of the membership of the

20 Deinzer, op.cit., III:132, 134; Selke, op.cit., 45; Ebenezer, op.cit., 166.
21 Der Lutheraner XII (Feb. 26, 1856) 106-108.

Missouri Synod were Bavarians and Frankonias (Löhe representatives).[22] The growth of the attendance at the St. Louis seminary, intended primarily for American students, was even more striking than that of Ft. Wayne seminary. Between 1850 and 1854, ninety-four students, had registered and sixty-eight of these had entered the ministry.[23] In 1860 the total enrolment had risen to eighty-six. In spite of Löhe's determined efforts on behalf of the new venture in Iowa, "Missouri's" expansion in the West was not seriously handicapped.

The advantage of the Missouri Synod did not halt the growth of its "Old Lutheran" rival. From a membership of four, when the Iowa Synod was founded, it had grown to forty-one ministers and fifty congregations in ten years. In 1873 it could boast of one hundred pastors and one hundred and forty-three congregations. Considerable credit for this early success is due the Fritschel brothers and their ability to maintain the support of the Löhe foundation until the latter part of the sixties, when Löhe withdrew from the American missionary field.[24]

By the middle of the fifties the turn of events in the church of Germany proved favorable to the Missouri Synod. The reactionary and hierarchical forces, that had been awakened by the revolution of 1848 and brought about a union of

22 Der Lutheraner XI (Jan. 30, 1855) 90.
23 Der Lutheraner XII (Apr. 22, 1856) 140; XVI (May 29, 1860) 162.
24 Deinzer, op.cit., III:128; Selke, op.cit., 45.

throne andaltar, gradually yielded to more liberal concepts of state and church government. In the old Lutheran states the administrative affairs of the church were vested in synods composed of lay as well as clerical delegates.[25] Everywhere a protest against the hierarchical trends of the past was noticeable. In Saxony, the Reverend Frierich Brunn had broken with the state church in 1848. His study of Luther's works and Walther's book, Kirche und Amt, had made him a convert for "Missouri" doctrines and practices. In 1860 he was prevailed upon by Walther to do for "Missouri" what Löhe had done in the formative years of the synod.[26]

The formation of a close confessional bond with Brunn was indubitably one of the outstanding achievements of the Missouri Synod in the second half of the nineteenth century. No longer was it necessary for the synod to depend exclusively upon its journalistic efforts to batter down the prejudice Grabau and Löhe had aroused against it. In Brunn it found a vigorous and aggressive advocate, who succeeded in turning the tide of opposition from it. In an appeal for funds in Germany for sending men to Ft. Wayne seminary, where they were to complete their training for the American mission field, Der Pilger aus Sachsen, made much of the fact that the Missouri Synod looked to Saxony as the land of its origin. Brunn's journalistic

25 Ziegler, op.cit., 291, 292, 293, 299, 300, 301, 434, 438.
26 Ebenezer, op.cit., 467, 468.

efforts were later made more effective when he published a mission journal for propagating American mission needs.[27]

Brunn, who had passed through religious experiences at the University of Leipzig quite like those of Walther and his Saxon colleagues before him, was moved with a similar spiritual fervor. Once having decided to promote the interest of his Lutheran brethren in America he utilized all the resources at his command to achieve his objective. From year to year he traveled throughout Saxony and northern Germany making personal appeals in the interest of "Missouri" and its enterprise. His efforts soon dispelled all opposition and again gave the Saxon synod a place of vantage in Lutheran Germany. In 1862, he was able to announce that his appeals were meeting with enthusiastic response and in no case did he encounter opposition to a program devoted exclusively to the support of "Missouri". In Saxony, Hanover, and Lauenburg, the willingness to cooperate with "Missouri" alone was in response to historical rather than dogmatic motives.[28]

Early in January 1861, Brunn had made all arrangements to open a "Proseminar" (preparatory school) and was prepared to extend his work as soon as funds were available. By this time "Missouri" had prospered to such an extent that Walther's appeal at home for voluntary contributions for the

27 Der Lutheraner XVII (Mar. 7, 1861), 121-123, (June 11, 1861) 171, 172.

28 Der Lutheraner XVIII (Apr. 16, 1862) 141, 142; (Aug. 6, 1862 205; XIX (Sep. 3, 1862) 56.

German project met with almost immediate response. The funds sent to Germany exceeded the fondest hopes of Brunn.[29] Even then the American contributions, steadily augmented by German gifts, fell far short of the requirements necessary to care for the large number of students who applied for foreign missionary training. Of the eighty to one hundred applicants in 1863, only twenty or thirty could be accepted. With adequate financial assistance Brunn might readily have supplied the needs of the practical theological seminary at Ft. Wayne, and the teachers seminary conducted in conjunction with the college. After the opening of a separate teacher's seminary at Addison, Illinois, in 1864, "Missouri's" benefactor agreed to send twenty men annually to Addison for teachers training preparatory for service in Lutheran parochial schools.[30]

Nothing could have been more encouraging to the leaders of "Missouri" than the momentum their efforts had received. No one realized more than Wyneken or Walther the advantage of being first on the new field "for the harvest".[31]

When new German immigrants began pouring into the West after the Civil War, "Missouri's" resources at home and

29 Der Lutheraner XVII (Mar. 5, 1861) 119, (Apr. 30, 1861)151, (May 14, 1861) 160, (July 9, 1861) 191, (Aug. 6, 1861) 207.
30 Der Lutheraner XVIII (Feb. 5, 1861) 103; XX ((Nov. 15, 1863) 47, (July 1, 1864) 67, (July 15, 1864) 174, 175; XXI (May 1, 1865) 134; XXII (Dec. 1, 1865) 52; Walther's Briefe I:191.
31 Walther's Briefe I:159.

abroad were so coordinated that the synod was better able than any other to send its pastors into new settlements and outflank its rivals. Simultaneous with the expansion of the German "Proseminar" the physical plants at St. Louis and Ft. Wayne were enlarged and the teacher's seminary at Addison was opened in preparation for future expansion.[32] On the other hand Grabau had suffered a decisive setback from the hands of "Missouri" in 1866, and the Iowa Synod was having to depend almost entirely on its own resources.

After more than twenty years of service in the interest of confessional Lutheranism in America, Walther was filled with optimism when he described the fruits of "Missouri's" labors. "It is a source of profound joy to travel through the United States and everywhere see the results of the selfsacrifice and zeal of our pastors. Through their untiring efforts germinal or key (Kern) congregations have been founded, possessing a thorough and sound understanding of Lutheran doctrines. These have become a veritable leaven in their communities....I rejoice when I think back to the terrible conditions which existed when I landed in America, when hardly a trace of Lutheran understanding was to be found". The synod has been extended throughout the

32 Der Lutheraner XVI (Sep. 8, 1857) 15; XVII (Apr. 2, 1861) 136, 137; (Mar. 15, 1863) 112; XX (Feb. 1, 1864) 87, (Mar. 1, 1864) 104.

union as a network reaching from the farthest north in Minnesota, to the farthest south in Louisiana and Texas, from the extreme east in New York and Virginia, to the west in California. Sound Lutheran literature and old documents in thousands of volumes have found their way to America, and even in other synods a healthful growth is apparent."[33]

In the same letter he alluded to the conflict with "Buffalo" as a cross, but in spite of this he regarded it a blessing in disguise since it led to a more intensive study. Brunn's work he considered an important step in the cause of Lutheranism in America and in maintaining a point of contact with the mother church. In still another letter to Brunn written November 8, 1865, he said: "It is wonderful to see the way in which God turns the hearts of people to us in all parts of the United States. Doors are opened to us in spite of the ooposition against us appearing in most periodicals, in spite of all of the sectarian emissaries who precede and follow us to sow the seed of distrust".[34]

33 Walther's Briefe I:160 (Mar. 2, 1861)
34 Walther's Briefe I: 234.

CHAPTER XII

THE SCANDINAVIAN AND GERMAN LUTHERANS

Lutherans of all shades were influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by the leaven of orthodoxy disseminated by the "Old Lutherans" from Germany. As the "American Lutherans" of the East were forced to give ground to the onslaught of confessionalism from the West, the Scandinavians of the West were gradually being cast into a more confessional mold by their conservative German Lutheran neighbors. Their practical isolation from the influence of the mother church in Scandinavia made the Norwegians and Swedes all the more susceptible to the American religious currents and caused them to scan the situation in a hope of making such adjustments as would enable them to meet a temporary crisis.[1]

1 The History of Scandinavian Lutheranism in both its European and American setting are ably presented in George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration (Minneapolis, 1932); The Founding of the Augustana Synod; J. Magnus Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872.

Barring typically national and regional characteristics, the religious forces which helped to mold the character of the Scandinavian immigrants were not very different from those in the rest of Europe. In the established church of Sweden and Norway, the Lutheran, formalism, high-churchism, and rationalism had made considerable progress, particularly among the higher clergy and those in the urban centers. Such a religious background coupled with the fact that the pastors were, above all, state officials contributed toward a spiritual neglect of their flock and a decline of popular interest in the formal church service. On all sides the preachers were severely criticised by the "Pietists" (läsare) in Sweden, and by the Haugians or lay preachers and reformers in Norway for an utter lack of appreciation of moral and spiritual values. This protest against the demoralizing influence of seventeenth century formalism, and eighteenth century rationalism and materialism was not so different from the "new measures" in America such as Sabbath observance, temperance movements and revivalism. While this new phenomena endangered the very doctrinal structure of the Lutheran church in America, the movement in Scandinavia was held in check by a persistent emphasis upon "pure Lutheran doctrine", a doctrinal attitude which placed the Scandinavian Lutherans

between the "American Lutherans" and the "Old Lutherans".

Of the two immigrant groups the Norwegians showed a greater doctrinal cleavage and diversity in ritualistic practice. The one faction led by Elling Eielsen, who arrived at Fox River, Illinois, in 1839, was composed almost entirely of settlers from Stavanger, Norway, a commercial center which had been torn by religious dissent bordering on revolt. It was in this hotbed that Haugianism, a movement represented by Eielsen in America took root. Hans Nielsen Hauge, born of peasant stock in 1771, became incensed over the failure of the clergy to lead their flock to God. After passing through religious experiences, common to many a great leader, he set out to preach the Bible according to his own convictions even though he had not been ordained or trained in the customary manner of the Lutheran divine. In the face of most trying opposition, punishment and even imprisonment he pushed his activity with a determination that seemed to sweep all before him. Unflinchingly he denounced the wickedness and flagrant neglect of the clergy in the execution of their spiritual functions. It was largely in this atmosphere of spiritual strife that Norwegian immigrants had been reared.

The Fox River settlement, a second Stavanger torn by controversies between Quakers and varying shades of

Haugianists, was a fertile field for sectarian propaganda. Into this community the lay preacher, Elling Eielsen, injected his personality, freed Fox River of most of its sects, and brought most of the settlers back into the low-church fold of Lutheranism. His natural antipathy against the clergy soon became such an obsession with him that he could hardly think of the clergy without accusing the "long-frocked" churchmen of "living in dance and drunkenness, riot and revel". Eielsen might truly have carried Norwegian Lutheranism in America with him had it not been for his crude and roughshod manner by which he hoped to accomplish his ends. But instead his bitter invectives left an indelible stamp of high and low churchism on the Danish Lutheran Church.

The anti-clericalism, so common among the Fox River settlers, was by no means general in other Norwegian colonies. A considerable number of the immigrants, as exemplified in Muskego and Koshkonong, Wisconsin, were moderate Haugianists ready to accept the services of lay preachers, until such time when a regularly ordained pastor was available. They had a profound respect for the clerical office. The dangers and tragedies of frontier life inadvertedly turned their thoughts back to their homeland and the parting admonition of their pastors, had awakened in them a longing for a duly

consecrated minister. Though the spiritual needs of the Muskego settlement were ably directed by two of its most respected citizens, these lay-preachers, no less opposed to this procedure, were instrumental in having Claus Lauritz Clausen regularly called and ordained pastor of their church in 1843. In spite of Bielsen's numerous visits to the Muskego settlement he was unable to secure a real following there.

Intimately associated with the Muskego group, served by Clausen, was the Koshkonong settlement under the pastoral charge of J. W. C. Dietrichson, ordained by Bishop Sörensen, on February 26, 1844, at Oslo Church in Sweden. He came to America with the resolve permanently to establish the Norwegian Church in the New World. With this objective before him he decided to settle in Koshkonong because of its central location with reference to other Norwegian settlements in Wisconsin and Illinois. He was convinced of the necessity of organizing his countrymen into congregations along the lines laid down by the Norwegian State Church, if they were to be saved from the sectarian confusion which was besetting them on all sides. Little difficulty was encountered in bringing Clausen in line with his high-church attitude, but the gulf between Dietrichson and the low-church anti-clerical Bielsen was so great that a clash between the two was inevitable.

While Dietrichson and Clausen pursued their program of building churches and organizing congregations, Nielsen busied himself with the task of gathering his followers in the northwest states, in Missouri and Texas "about the Word of God without bothering about such claptrap as organization". In spite of his aversion to formal congregational structure, the general trend toward group unity among the Lutherans of the West, coupled with the pressure exerted by Nielsen's converts, Paul Anderson and Olaf Andrewsen, caused him to abandon his arbitrary procedure and adopt constitutional safeguards for his followers. By 1846 he had capitulated and consented to the introduction of "constitutional claptrap".

Two years later his converts turned against him and on trumped up charges forced him out of the synodical organization founded in 1846. With Nielsen out of the way they proceeded to join the Franckean Synod, one of the most liberal synods which rejected the Augsburg Confession and sought to unite the Lutheran and Reformed into a single body. As the situation became untenable for Anderson in the Franckean Synod, and he found himself practically ostracized by the Norwegians he struck up a friendship with Esbjörn, then a liberal Swedish pastor, and they with several Swedes and Norwegians formed the Synod of Northern Illinois in 1851, as a protest against the loose confessionalism of the Franckean Synod.

In 1850, P. A. Rassmussen, who came to America from Norway toserve in the capacity of a parochial school teacher, was affiliated with Nielsen in founding the synod of the "Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America", or the Nielsen Synod. In conjunction with his teaching duties Rassmussen, as was wont in the Lutheran Church, performed the duties of an assistant pastor or lay-preacher. Dissatisfied with his qualification he concluded to enter the "practical" theological seminary of the Missouri Synod at Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Here under the able guidance of Sihler he was indoctrinated with the fundamental tenets of the Missouri Synod. In the critical years of the fifties, when the doctrinal conflict between "Missouri" and other German Lutheran Synods had reached almost a white heat, Rassmussen could hardly be expected to escape the impact of the controversies. The conflict between "Missouri" and "Buffalo" concerning the ministry, which had a semblance of the dispute between the exponents of high and low-churchism in the Norwegian Church, was at its height in Rassmussens student days and the quarrel between Ohio and Iowa on the one hand and "Missouri" on the other had gotten under way when he was ordained in 1854.

Dietrichson and his followers were even more insistent upon a synodical organization than the other Norwegian Lutheran factions, but various circumstances intervened to prevent an early completion of such a task. The plan of

organization was temporarily interrupted by Dietrichson's mission in Norway between 1845 and 1846, in the interest of the church in America. No sooner than he returned he and his associates took up their task of organization with renewed vigor. New congregations were gathered and a standard form of congregational constitution was evolved which was a model for future congregations, and its basic doctrinal provisions, like those of Walther's constitution for his church at St.-Louis, were incorporated into Dietrichson's synodical constitution adopted by his colleagues in 1851.

Dietrichson's lack of tact, and his domineering personality coupled with an exalted notion of his office prevented the consummation of a new synodical order under his leadership. Not until after his permanent departure for Norway in 1850 was his plan realized by a corps of able and less aggressive followers. The leadership of Dietrichson now fell upon the Reverend A. C. Preus and H. A. Preus, who directed the destiny of the new synod from 1852 until the latter's death in 1894. These in conjunction with Clausen, Nils Brandt and G. F. Dietrichson met in convention at Muskego, February, 1852, rescinded the organization of 1851 and adopted a new constitution which eliminated the controversial features of the Dietrichson constitution.

Once the Norwegians had formally organized, the question of their future affiliation was a matter of vital

concern to the older Lutheran Synods. The Synod of Northern Illinois with a preponderant Swedish membership cast its lot with the General Synod in 1853, then the largest Lutheran organization in the United States. The symbolical Fielsen and Norwegian Synods would necessarily have to look to the more conservative Lutheran synods of the West. Of these the Joint Synod of Ohio made a strong bid for the Norwegian Synod, in the hope that such an arrangement would increase its prestige in the Middle West. It had gone to great lengths to erase from its constitution the objectionable Reformed features, and had impressed upon the Norwegians that it had not only subscribed to the Augsburg Confession but to all of the Lutheran Symbols. It placed the stamp of approval upon the constitution of the Norwegian Synod and in 1851, invited it to affiliate and establish a professorship in "Ohio's" seminary, Capital University at Columbus, Ohio. The offer, however, was rejected on the ground that the synod did not possess sufficient knowledge of its doctrine and practice to unite with the Joint Synod of Ohio.[2]

What part the Missouri Synod had in preventing such an arrangement is, of course, a question, but we do know that the Joint Synod of Ohio was frequently singled out in Der Lutheraner for its Reformed tendencies and un-Lutheran practices.

2 Rhone, op.cit., 123-127.

In spite of the constitutional compromise of the Ohio Synod, the Missouri Synod could not refrain from pointing out the bid made for Reformed support by administering the Lord's Supper in a manner acceptable to them. In 1850 and 1851 the contents of the hymnal used by the Joint Synod of Ohio was severely criticized, for in it were found hymns of a decided Calvinistic tinge. Many of the old songs of the Reformation period with a decided Lutheran coloring were found to have been entirely omitted.[3] This interest of "Missouri" in the Norwegian Lutherans was not purely negative, for in 1848 Walther's congregation made a liberal contribution to J. Gustavus Schmidt who had organized a Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Chicago.[4]

Once a wedge had been driven between the Norwegian Synod and the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Missouri Synod occupied a position of vantage within Norwegian ranks. The removal of the clauses in the constitution of the Norwegian Synod in 1852, which had been the source of relentless attacks from Bielsen was a first unconscious step toward an understanding. It was not until the middle of the fifties, when the dispute between the two groups was placed upon a scholarly plane, that peace

3 Der Lutheraner V (Oct. 3, 1848) 17; VIII (Nov. 26, 1850) 55; (Jan. 7, 1851) 77; Above 127, 129, 133.
4 Der Lutheraner III (Dec. 28, 1847) 67; Mar. 21, 1848) 120.

overtures were made. Rasmussen, a leader in Nielsen's Synod, showed the effect of his "Missouri" training by occupying a doctrinal position between that of Nielsen and the Norwegian Synod. This gesture on his part opened the way for negotiations between these hostile factions. In the course of the discussions between 1856 and 1862 the work of Walther's Kirche und Ampt and the articles contained in Lehre und Wehre, "Missouri's" theological journal, figured extensively.[5]

The most serious obstacle to amicable relations was removed in 1856 when Rasmussen with about half the membership of the Nielsen Synod broke with their leader over a proposal to impose certain restrictions on lay-activity. Another factor contributing to negotiations between the Rasmussen faction and the Norwegian Synod was the "Synod's" desire to establish closer relations with "Missouri" by creating a Norwegian professorship at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, and sending young men to that institution for pastoral training. Both factions now were able to find in "Missouri" a party in a favorable position to act as an intermediary. At the series of conferences held between 1859 and 1862 for ironing out doctrinal differences prominent "Missourians" like Walther, Fürbringer, Crämer, and Lochner were present and participated in the discussions. When it finally seemed as though a deadlock

5 Rohne, op.cit., 153-179.

was imminent, Walther was able to step in the breach and bring about a union and make the Missouri Synod the directing force in the new Synod.[6]

The addition of the Rassmussen faction to membership in the Norwegian Synod was a conspicuous advantage to the prestige of the Missouri Synod. It had not only brought together two divergent groups but had strengthened its position among the Norwegian Lutherans. In the fall of 1859, the Norwegian Synod had established a Norwegian professorship at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, to meet the urgent needs of missionating among the Norwegian immigrants. From 1859 until 1876, when the Norwegians founded an independent seminary, their divinity students trained at "Missouri" institutions were motivated by the spirit which set the Missouri Synod apart from all other confessional Lutheran bodies in America.[7]

The Swedish Lutherans were in much the same predicament as the Norwegians when it came to ministering to the spiritual needs of their immigrant brethren. With but faint hopes for assistance from the mother church in Sweden they were forced to meet a religious crisis as best they could. They were confronted by the alternative of independent action or alliance with an existing Lutheran Synod. With "American" and "Old Lutherans" alike bidding for Scandinavian affiliates,

6 Rohne, op.cit., 153-179.
7 Rohne, op.cit., 181-196; Ebenezer, op.cit., 264-268.

the Swedes found it rather difficult to choose between the contending groups. The German Lutherans were at swords points with each other over doctrinal matters, the Joint Synod of Ohio was too far removed from the real field of Swedish activity, while the General Synod of the East seemed all too liberal for the pietistic and seeming liberal Swedish Lutherans. In this dilemma Esbjörn, a pietist and liberal and founder of the Swedish Church in America, decided to cast his lot with the Norwegian pastor Anderson and other Lutherans in founding the Synod of Northern Illinois at Cedarsville on September 18, 1851.

From the first the Synod of Northern Illinois was torn by opposing confessional trends, each hoping ultimately to gain the advantage for their doctrinal tenets. The conservatives were extolled for their doctrinal steadfastness and were led to believe, that they had been tricked into an alliance with a psudo-Lutheran and Calvinistic synod. As the doctrinal bickerings between the contending factions became more intolerable the Scandinavian Lutherans, led by Esbjörn who had come to occupy a more conservative position, seceded from the synod in 1860 and organized the Evangelical Augustana Synod of North America.

The synod adopted as its rule of faith the oldest

creeds of the Christian Church as well as "the Augsburg Confession as a correct summary of the essentials of Christian doctrine developed and explained in the other symbolical books". In 1870, after the Norwegians withdrew, the Augustana Synod affiliated with the General Council, a body loyal to the Lutheran symbols.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GENERAL SYNOD SUCCUMBS TO CONSERVATISM

By the middle of the nineteenth century the liberal party of the General Synod of the "American Lutheran" Church had been put on the defensive against the rising tide of confessional Lutheranism from the West. Within its own ranks the leaven of orthodoxy threatened the very structure of the "American Lutheran" Church of the East. No longer could the liberal editor of the Lutheran Observer look as complacently upon the future as in 1845, when he drew a comparison between the "Old Lutherans" of the West and their brethren of the Prussian Church: "Having said this much, it is scarcely necessary to add that the same narrow bigoted spirit which prevails among the school in Prussia, seems to rule with undiminished force in the West. Thank God this unholy spirit can never enter our English Churches". In less than a decade he found the cause of conservative Lutheranism advancing and even threatening to sweep the General Synod before it. No longer was the

Tennessee Synod's demand for confessionalism the sole voice of an "American Lutheran" group in the East which demanded a return to Luther and his doctrines.

Within the General Synod itself the proponents of a stricter allegiance to the Lutheran confessions were making themselves heard. In the theological seminary at Gettysburg, where S. S. Schmucker had championed the cause of "American Lutheranism" for more than two decades, the conservative party was ably represented in the latter forties by William M. Reynolds. After 1848 the Lutheran Observer had ceased to be the sole spokesman for the "American Lutherans" and the right wing of the synod came to the defense of historic Lutheranism by the publication of the Missionary in 1848, edited by William A. Passavant at Pittsburgh, and the Evangelical Review edited by William M. Reynolds, professor at Gettysburg Seminary and colleague of S. S. Schmucker.[4] A similar voice of protest against the radical trends within the General Synod was raised by many of the more conservative pastors in the affiliated synods. Everywhere the conservatives succeeded in occupying strategic positions and gaining control

[4] Note: The "Missionary" was first published as a monthly, but from 1856 it appeared as a weekly and was merged with the Philadelphia Lutheran in 1861. The Evangelical Review was a quarterly theological magazine. Since 1872 it has been published under the new title, The Lutheran Quarterly, which later merged with the Lutheran Church Review, organ of the General Council, under the title Lutheran Church Quarterly.

of synodical affairs. The liberal Ministerium of New York was carried into conservative ranks by the move of German immigration.[1]

Synods toward which the General Synod had cast covetous glances had been forced to capitulate to the conservative party before they were incorporated in the general body. The application of four of such synods to the General Synod in 1853, was, without a doubt, in response to a sincere desire on the part of the confessionalists, both in and outside of the General Synod, to force it into more conservative channels. In that year the mother synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, was readmitted after thirty years of separation growing out of its hostility to the dominance of liberals in the General Synod. Simultaneous with the Ministerium the Synods of Pittsburgh, of Texas, and of Northern Illinois, each a bit more reactionary than the other, were accepted into synodical membership. Thereafter the left wing Lutherans headed by S. S. Schmucker and Benjamin Kurtz were hard pressed to retain leadership and perpetuate their principles of progressive Lutheranism.

From 1853 to 1855 both factions sought by strategy to gain a position of vantage without disturbing the calm which

1 The Evangelical Reveiw IV (Oct. 1853) 275; Stephenson, The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration, 149; Ferm, op.cit., 146; Wentz, op.cit., 174, 175; Above 55, 56.

seemed to pervade the conventions of the General Synod. In 1854, but one year after its affiliation with the General Synod, the leadership of the Synod of Northern Illinois was captured by the more confessional Swedish Lutherans, who forced through a revision of the constitution by substituting for the words "mainly correct" as applied to the Augsburg Confession the word "correct". In the following year the same faction had forced Francis Springer, a left wing "American Lutheran", to resign the presidency of Illinois State University and abandon his hopes of using that educational institution of the Synod of Northern Illinois as an agency sowing the seed of "American Lutheranism" among the "Old Lutherans" of the West. S. W. Harkey, a confessionalist, was appointed president pro-tempore to be succeeded by William M. Reynolds in 1857. In the Maryland Synod Benjamin Kurtz, finding his position untenable, withdrew from it with colleagues of like mind and founded the Melanchthon Synod upon broad latitudinarian basis by directly repudiating doctrines laid down in the Augsburg Confession.[2]

The atmosphere in the General Synod was charged with a tenseness which evinced the coming of a severe storm. Church periodicals and pamphlet literature presented the pros and cons of the contending forces in the "American Lutheran"

2 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology 144, 145; Jacobs, op.cit., 432, 433; Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod, 1850-1860; Wentz, op.cit., 176, 177.

church with the "Old Lutheran" journals adding the weight of their influence in supporting the advocates of a more formal Lutheranism. In all fairness to the Lutheran Observer it must be said that its editor was as impartial as such an ardent supporter of the radical group could expect to be in making available its columns to both factions. He and S. S. Schmucker brought into play all of their ingenuity and scholarship to show that the Lutheran Church was the result of an historical evolution rather than a static institution, and therefore the Lutherans of the nineteenth century were not bound by the dogmas and confession which had been evolved under sixteenth century conditions. In the course of the formal discussions in the early fifties the entire controversy was removed from the realm of confusion and uncertainty and given a definiteness, by the liberals laying down specific principles upon which they hoped to establish the "American Lutheran" Church.[3] But the conservatives were not idle, for with tradition, dogmas, and confessions on their side their chief spokesman, William M. Reynolds, declared through the columns of the Lutheran Observer, "the General Synod and all united with it are children of the Augsburg Confession, or rather this is a

3 Form, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 187; Jacobs, op.cit., 367.

part of a common inheritance bequeathed to them by their forefathers, the precious legacy of their faith and piety".[4]

As the opposition to Schmucker's theory became more pronounced he put aside his former reserve and stated explicitly his doctrinal position. He contended, the Augsburg Confession was the only Lutheran Confession which had ever been acknowledged by the whole church; that the respective Lutheran countries of Europe had taken on distinctive characteristics, and therefore the American church should adapt itself to its peculiar environment. Among other things he said: "Our own impression of the equity of the case is this, that so long as the Lutheran Church, in this or any other country, adheres to the principle of Lutheranism, that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and believes the cardinal doctrines of Luther's system, together with so many of his peculiarities, or to agree more fully with them as a whole, than with the peculiarities of any other denomination, she may justly retain the Lutheran name; and all the world, a few ultraists excepted, will cordially proclaim the equity of the designation".[5]

On the basis of this supposition, Schmucker declared that the laity as well as the clergy had a right to

4 The Lutheran Observer XVII (Dec. 28, 1849) 205.
5 The Lutheran Observer XVIII (Jan. 18, 1850) 218; (Jan. 25, 1850) 221.

change what "they believed wrong in the religious practices of their predecessors and to conform it to the Word of God as had Luther and the other Christians of the sixteenth century".[6] He denied the validity of certain of the doctrines set forth in the Augsburg Confession and accepted by the "Old Lutherans", such as the bodily presence of the Savior in the Lord's Supper, the doctrine of mass, (in reality a statement pertaining to the Lord's Supper), confession, absolution, excommunication, baptismal regeneration, and a denial of a divine obligation of a Christian Sabbath.[7]

The educational strategy of Schmucker and his colleagues, Kurtz and Samuel Sprecher, merely added fuel to the fire of discontent, for it awakened a determination in the conservatives to resist all onslaughts intending to undermine the most sacred of all Lutheran confessions. They were reenforced from year to year by the steadily mounting stream of "Old Lutheran" immigrants into established Lutheran communities. For the liberals everything seemed to point to the need of injecting some positive doctrinal statement into the religious order to salvage "American Lutheranism" and prevent those in doctrinal doubt from slipping into the conservative ranks.[8]

6 The Lutheran Observer XVIII (Feb. 15, 1850) 233.
7 The Lutheran Observer XVII (Nov. 9, 1849) 170; Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod 1850-1860, 24; Jacobs, op.cit., 424.
8 Ferm, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology 186-189; Neve, op.cit., 123; Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod 1850-1860, 31.

In September, 1855, Schmucker, upon the advice of Kurtz and Sprecher, circulated anonymously the "Definite Synodical Platform", in which he gathered together upon a credal basis the doctrines evolved since the formation of the General Synod in 1820. In substance it was a complete revision and modernization of the Augsburg Confession in which certain articles were omitted entirely and others so modified as to bear only a slight resemblance of that historic document. It proposed to lay down a doctrinal basis for the General Synod which would expel all doubts concerning the tenets of "American Lutheranism" and place it upon a positive confessional foundation. It boldly rejected all of the Symbols except the Augsburg Confession and revised it to such an extent that it was hardly discernible from its prototype. Through this declaration the "American Lutherans" were to be made to stand out in bold relief against the German Lutherans who accepted literally all historic symbols of the church.[9]

To insure unity the author of the Platform advised its adoption by the synods of the General Synod, with the resolution "that we will not receive into our synod any minister who will not adopt this Platform".[10] Such a resolution would have excluded from the General Synod all who denied that the Augsburg Confession contained certain fundamental errors.

9 Form, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology 185, 234.
10 Jacobs, op.cit., 425.

The reception of the Definite Synodical Platform was sorely disappointing to Schmucker and his colleagues. They had failed to sense the basic changes which had occurred in the Lutheran Church of America since 1845, and had underrated the effectiveness of such periodicals as Der Lutheraner, The Lutheran Standard and Lehre und Wehre, in awakening a deeper Lutheran consciousness. The party of opposition to the Platform was far larger after 1855 than its supporters, called the "Platformists", had anticipated. In fact, Schmucker's position, as head of the Gettysburg Seminary, had become so untenable that he was obliged to resign in 1864. His place was filled by Dr. J. A. Brown, well known for his conservative views and pronounced antagonism toward Schmucker.[11]

After the adjournment of the convention in 1855, the Definite Synodical Platform was submitted to the synods affiliated with the General Synod. Only a few of the smaller ones subscribed to the doctrines set forth, while a majority of them raised a vigorous protest against the document. From the "American Lutheran" East to the "Old Lutheran" West, church publications denounced it and one declared the Platform treason to the cause of Lutheranism". Synods outside the General body, much concerned over the consequences of such radical declaration,

11 Form, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 334; Neve, op.cit., 126, 127; Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod 1850-1860, 31; Wentz, op.cit., 188-190.

met in a joint assembly to discuss the Augsburg Confession and its place in the Lutheran church. At the conventions held in Columbus, Ohio, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Walther, of the Missouri Synod, was one of the leading speakers, something which would have been inconceivable a decade ago. The hostile attitude of the "Symbolists" aggravated the situation and brought the synod face to face with ultimate disintegration.[12]

After 1857 the lines of cleavage had grown so tense that complete synodical disintegration was inevitable. In each succeeding convention new and perplexing questions harassed the delegates, in which the liberals made gestures of approving a confessional compromise, but almost in the same breath they decidedly turned to the left. In 1859 the Melanchthon Synod, created by Benjamin Kurtz because of his resentment against the refusal of the Maryland Synod to adopt the Definite Synodical Platform, applied for admission to the General Synod. This application placed squarely before the synod the recognition of a body which stood four square on the declarations of the Platform. In the vote taken the principle of latitudinarianism, which characterized the General Synod, prevailed and by a divided vote of ninety-six to twenty-six the Melanchthon Synod was admitted, on recommendation that it reconsider and

12 Fern, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology 236-322, 331; Jacobs, op.cit., 428; Neve, op.cit., 126; Der Lutheraner XII (Nov. 6, 1855) 46.

change its doctrinal basis "of the paragraph in regard to certain alleged errors in the interest of harmony and the furtherance of the great objects for which we are laboring together".[13] This action brought forth a violent protest from the representative of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the Scandinavian delegates sitting in the convention.[14]

At this assembly the General Synod had reached its height, for the political events of the nation were shaping themselves in such a way as to separate the Union and Confederate factions of the "American Lutheran" Church. Owing to the uncertainty and confusion caused by the Civil War a postponement of the meeting of the synod until 1862 was deemed advisable. The Southern delegates refused to participate in the convention of 1862, as the resolution sent to President Lincoln by the Northern wing of the Synod was interpreted by the Southern Lutherans as an act of exclusion barring them from future membership in the General Synod. In 1863 the five district synods which had withdrawn organized "The General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America" upon a strict confessional foundation. Like

13 Proceedings of Nineteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, May 19-26, 1859 (Gettysburg 1859) 11.
14 Jacobs, op.cit., 433.

other Protestant denominations fundamentalism was so much more firmly rooted in the South than in the North, that in 1866 the southern Lutherans decided to perpetuate the synod under the name the "Evangelical Lutheran General Synod in North America". Having decided to plant themselves "firmly upon the Augsburg Confession, the proud bulwark of Protestantism, despite all opposition from whatever source arrayed against us" the southern synod could hardly have been expected to reunite with the General Synod in 1866.[15]

The final crisis in the history of the General Synod came in 1864, when the Franckean Synod petitioned for membership. At a convention of the general body assembled at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in 1839, it condemned the Franckean Synod for having introduced practices which the General Synod "considered contrary to the Word of God".[16] Motivated by a desire for synodical expansion this ban was lifted in 1857. The admission of the Melanchthon Synod to membership in the General Synod so encouraged the Franckean Synod that it applied for admission to the synod. After a heated debate the Franckean Synod was admitted by a vote of ninety-seven to forty, on condition that "said synod at its next meeting, declare in an

15 Jacobs, op.cit., 453, 454.
16 Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States convened at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, June 1, 1839, 17.

official manner its adoption of the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession as a substantially correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrine of the Word of God".[17] By this act the General Synod established a precedent whereby a synod could be admitted without making any open declaration of assent to the basic confessions of the Lutheran Church. To add fuel to the flames the Franckean Synod had gone so far as to substitute its own confession of faith for the fundamental Lutheran confession.[18]

There seemed to be no other alternative for the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and synods of like mind than to issue a formal protest against the action taken. The solace offered the confessionalists by pledging the General Synod to a formal acceptance of the Augsburg Confession must have seemed nothing less than a mockery of everything that savored of Lutheranism. In keeping with the terms upon which the Ministerium had joined the General Synod in 1853, its delegates withdrew from the assembly of the convention in 1864, and in 1866 the formal separation from the General Synod was officially announced at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The action

17 Proceedings of the Twenty-first Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States assembled at York, Pennsylvania, 1864.

18 Fern, The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology, 339; Jacobs, op.cit., 455-458; Wentz, op.cit , 186, 187.

of the Ministerium was soon followed by the New York Ministerium, the Pittsburgh Synod, the English Synod of Ohio and the Synods of Illinois, Minnesota and Texas.[19] Two years before a formal separation from the General Synod all hopes of a reconciliation were out of the question, for the Ministerium severed its relations with the Gettysburg Seminary and founded its own school at Philadelphia, whose faculty was made up of Charles Porterfield Krauth, C. F. Schaeffer and W. J. Mann, all staunch defenders of the Lutheran Confession.[20]

No sooner than the formal break with the General Synod had occurred, the Ministerium put into motion the machinery for uniting all of the Lutheran synods of the United States and Canada, which were willing to pledge their support to all of the Lutheran confessions and symbols. At the preliminary convention assembled at Reading, Pennsylvania, December twelfth to fourteenth, 1866, thirteen synods were represented including the Missouri Synod, a body which had thus far held itself aloof from such assemblies. The willingness of "Missouri" to participate in this endeavor was sufficient proof that a considerable number of the "American Lutherans" had capitulated to "Old Lutheranism". Throughout the entire nation synods and congregations passed through a process of disintegration in which their membership felt themselves called upon to choose between fundamentalism and liberalism.[21]

19-Jacobs, op.cit., 458, 464-466.
20 Jacobs, op.cit., 461; Wentz, op.cit., 189.
21 Jacobs, op.cit., 471, 472; Der Lutheraner XXIII (Jan. 1, 1867), 15.

In the preliminary discussions at the Reading meeting both the German and English languages were employed. The fundamental principles of faith formulated for the convention by Charles Porterfield Krauth placed the assembly squarely on the doctrinal basis of the Augsburg Confession and the other symbolical books because they were "in perfect harmony of one and the same spiritual faith". Matters of ecclesiastical polity were to be left to the respective synods. With the exception of the representatives of "Missouri" and the Norwegian Synod the delegates agreed to the consummation of a new General Synod, and decided to meet in formal session the following year. In November 1867, the first convention of "The General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America" met at Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Three years later the Augustana Synod, which had been formed by a separation of the Scandinavian from the Synod of Northern Illinois in 1860, joined the General Council.[22]

Though both "Missouri" and the Norwegian Synod were perfectly satisfied with the doctrinal basis adopted by the Reading convention, they favored a delay of several years before a final organization was established. In these years they recommended the holding of free conferences in which all synods concerned might arrive at a common understanding of doctrines and practices as an outward expression of loyalty to the confessions. In 1872 Sihler declared that the Missouri

22 Der Lutheraner XXIII (Jan. 1, 1867) 15; Jacobs, op.cit., 472; Wentz, op.cit., 193.

Synod was perfectly satisfied with the doctrinal basis of the General Council and the General Synod of the South and would have entered into affiliation with them on that basis but they were obliged to hold themselves aloof from them because of certain fundamental doctrines and practices. The features they objected to were the toleration of so called "open questions", laxness in administering Holy Communion, pulpit fellowship with non-Lutherans, doctrines of the Church, the Ministry, church government, revivals, and protracted meetings.[23]

In 1867 the "American Lutheran" Church was divided into three major groups, the remnants of the old General Synod, the General Council and the General Synod of the South. The two latter synods had surrendered completely to the confessional stand of the "Old Lutherans" of the West and the General Synod was rapidly drifting into the channels of confessionalism due to external as well as internal pressure. The leaven of historical Lutheranism from the West coupled with the Lutheran immigrant invasion from Europe left their indelible stamp upon the "American Lutheran" Church. The General Synod had been forced to surrender its position of leadership held in 1860, when it included two thirds of the total membership of the Lutheran Church in America. By 1868, the schism from within combined with the increase of Lutherans by immigration, the General Synod could claim but a

23 Ebenezer, op.cit., 323.

fourth of the total membership of the Lutheran Church in America, having 86,198 communicant members and five hundred and ninety pastors.[24]

24 Jacobs, op.cit., 448, 466.

CHAPTER XIV

RETROSPECT OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD

Nothing could have created a greater sense of doctrinal security in "Old Lutherans", and convinced them that their rigid orthodoxy had been vindicated than the schismatic feud of the sixties in the "American Lutheran" church. Of all the confessional bodies the Missouri Synod had made the greatest strides in membership and doctrinal solidarity in spite of the charges of "doctrinal bigotry" preferred against it. In fact, adverse criticism and occasional scathing denunciations aroused in the "Missourians" a group consciousness and developed a confessional solidarity which has persisted to the present. Who seemed to have more reason to look upon the past with greater pride and anticipate the future with greater optimism than "Missouri" Its success and singleness of purpose was a source of encouragement to the faltering Lutherans and awakened in them a desire to emulate "Missouri".

The confidence which came with a feeling of Divine approval encouraged "Missouri" to strengthen the synod's position in the "American Lutheran" East. With characteristic "Missouri" strategy every opportunity was seized to found permanent congregations. From Old Trinity in New York City, church extension was carried into adjoining territory and into the New England states. From Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Baltimore, missionary activity was carried into Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.[1]

While this extension program was being fostered renewed efforts were made to arrive at amicable relations between "Missouri" and other confessional synods. The controversy with the Buffalo Synod was terminated in 1866 by a loss of Grabau congregations to "Missouri". Following several informal conferences the synods of Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois and the Norwegian synod affiliated in a Synodical Conference in 1872, which was a real triumph for "Missouri's" symbolical tenets. For almost a decade these cooperated in a program of missionary endeavor. Though doctrinal differences led to the withdrawal of "Ohio", the others have continued the arrangement with "Wisconsin" and "Minnesota" having been merged into the Wisconsin Synod and "Illinois" having become a District Synod of "Missouri".[2]

1 Ebenezer, op.cit., 173-208.
2 Ebenezer, op.cit., 321-332; 406-410; Der Lutheraner XXIV (Aug. 15, 1868) 188.

In spite of the determined efforts in the East the Missouri Synod never lost sight of the predominant importance of the West as a bulwark of Lutheran orthodoxy. Two events in the later fifties directed "Missouri's" attention to Minnesota. In these years in pursuance of the policy of the Federal Government to remove the Indians further west, many of the Chippewas from Michigan, missionated to by the Missouri Synod, and new German settlers from abroad and adjoining states found their way into Minnesota. To continue its work among the Indians and survey the new field for building new German congregations Ferdinand Sievers, pastor at Frankenlust, Michigan, and the Indian missionary Meisler were sent into the new field in 1856.[3]

Sievers had been preceded by four Lutheran pastors of varying shades of orthodoxy, who had come into the newly opened "Suland" with the first rush of immigration. All of them had taken up agriculture as an avocation and as a means of supplementing the meager income to be derived from preaching in a frontier country, a policy frowned upon by "Missouri", for the synod expected its pastors to devote all of their time to the duties of their spiritual office. On the other hand those ministered to were called upon to contribute to the support of their minister and when a congregation was organized

3 Der Lutheraner XXIII (Feb. 24, 1857) 109-111; Ebenezer, op.cit. 332; E. Meyer Pflanzungsgeschichte des Minnesota Distrikts (Minneapolis, 1932) 13-16; Selke, op.cit., 70.

and called a pastor it was believed to assume both a moral and financial responsibility toward him. Though this procedure prevented a mushroom like rise of congregations, it did, however, make for congregational stability through economic responsibility and a desire to extend its missionary efforts in adjoining communities.[4]

In the year of Sievers' survey of the missionary possibilities in Minnesota another explorer, A. A. Passavant, a conservative member of the General Synod, came to St. Paul with the express purpose of establishing an English Lutheran church. Following his return to Pittsburgh, in 1857, he secured the services of Father Heyer who had seen service for the Pennsylvania Ministerium in Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois and since 1842, had been a missionary in India. Under the auspice of the Missionary Society of the General Synod he founded the "Dreifaltigkeits Gemeinde" (Trinity Congregation) at St. Paul upon a positive confessional basis, but like other pastors of the General Synod, Heyer freely admitted Reformed to the Sacrament. While occupied with the duty of planting a new congregation Heyer busied himself with the task of trying to unite all Lutheran ministers in Minnesota, into a single synodical body regardless of nationality. Through his efforts and the cooperation of the ministers who had preceded

4 Meyer, op.cit., 11-29; Solke, op.cit., 49.

Sievers the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Minnesota and Adjacent States" was founded in 1860, consisting of six pastors, four of them farmer preachers, Heyer, Blumer, Brandt, Wier, Thomson and Hallinson.[5]

In the early years of Lutheran growth in Minnesota the Missouri Synod seemed to lag behind its next rival for Lutheran leadership, the Minnesota Synod. It might be noted in this connection that one pastor devoted exclusively to his calling was perhaps more valuable than four farming clergymen. While "Missouri" was pioneering in Minnesota the synod was actively engaged in similar enterprises in sections farther West and was strengthening its hold in the East. At the same time the break with the Ohio foundation, the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the insistence that newly established congregations contribute toward pastoral support all tended to retard expansion. In spite of these apparent handicaps the Missouri Synod methodically proceeded to station clergymen in strategic localities from which the foundations of new charges could be laid. In the later fifties William Hammeyer, John Horst and Paul Rupprecht were assigned Benton township in Carver County, Minneapolis, and Prairiemound.[6]

To meet the urgent demand for ministration among the German settlers of Minnesota and other sections the Missouri

5 Selke, op.cit., 87-110.
6 Meyer, op.cit., 32-36.

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6 Meyer, op.cit., 32-36.

Synod recommended an elaboration of the plan so successfully inaugurated by Wyneken and Sihler in the early years of the synod. In 1860 the synod proposed, that the respective District Synods assist in financing the sending of itinerant preachers who were to serve as assistants to pastors in organized centers. From these centers they explored the surrounding territory, organized congregations and held them in tact until a time when pastors were made available. The first assistant A. C. Winter was assigned to Reverend Horst in Minneapolis, from whence his mission was to be projected into central and southern Minnesota. About a decade later, in 1872, one of the most successful itinerant preachers, Henry Vetter was stationed at Waconia, Carver County, which was made a center for northward expansion. By the middle of the seventies the two had spread the "Missouri" network over twenty-three counties while other ministers were equally zealous in enlarging the radius of their field of service.[7] Simultaneous with and similar to the policy adopted in Minnesota was that pursued in Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and other regions of German settlement.[8] Much of the credit belongs to the Minnesota pastors for the pioneer work in Iowa, the Dakotas and finally into northwestern Canada and along the course of the Northern Pacific Railroad into Montana and the Northwest.[9] From one frontier to the other the Missouri Synod

7 Meyer, op.cit., 44-57, 73; Ebenezer, op.cit., 332-337.
8 Ebenezer, op.cit., 347-350, 353-363.
9 Meyer, op.cit., 91-102; 117-121; Selke, op.cit., 142.

followed the course of westward expansion until the elder isolated mission stations along the Pacific Coast were linked with the rest of its system into an integrated whole.

The unprecedented outpouring of German settlers from abroad and from the older states stimulated by the passage of the homestead act in 1862, the conclusion of the Civil War and the completion of several great transcontinental railways taxed to the utmost the resources and the ingenuity of the Missouri Synod to keep abreast of the movement. Undaunted by the magnitude of the task the synodical forces followed up the population movement in the seventies and eighties by concentrating upon strategic outposts, from which itinerant pastors expanded and tightened their hold on outlying Lutheran settlements until reenforcements could be brought up. In the closing years of the century and the first quarter of the twentieth century many frontier settlements of the seventies developed into thriving congregations.

Better prepared than any other Lutheran synod to capitalize new opportunities "Missouri" lost no time in expanding its facilities for training men for the mission field and awakening a spirit of responsibility and a willingness for service throughout the synod. In 1875 Concordia Seminary at St. Louis was made exclusively a theological seminary by transfering the college department to Ft. Wayne, and the practical division of the seminary to the old "Illinois State University" at Springfield, Illinois. In this new seminary acquired by "Missouri"

fairly mature men were given a shorter course of training than the students at St. Louis to enable the synod to meet the emergency demand for clergymen. The teachers college at Addison, Illinois, was forced to enlarge its physical plant as well as its teaching staff to care for an increasing enrolment. Under the circumstances the parochial schools were an inestimable asset for recruiting students for pastoral and teacher training. Through pulpit and school young men were enlisted for the seminaries and a feeling of pride in church service was awakened in young and old alike.

Though today the synod is represented in all but two states of the Union it is strongest where Germans or persons of German extraction are most numerous. In the New England and the Gulf states with the possible exception of Texas, a state with a considerable German population, the Missouri congregations are few in number. The Gulf Coast, New Orleans and the lower Mississippi River are dotted with "Missouri" churches having the greatest concentration in New Orleans and along the "German Coast" in Louisiana, that region on the Mississippi above and below New Orleans. Of the states south of the Ohio River and west to the Mississippi, Louisiana ranks first with seventeen pastors, while Texas to the West had ninety-nine in 1930. The states of California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Oklahoma are quite well

represented in proportion to their German population. More than two thirds of the ministers of the synod are located in the states of Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Missouri, Michigan, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio and Indiana, with Pennsylvania and New York ranking with several of these states from the point of numbers. Of the above states Illinois ranks first with three hundred and sixty-seven and Minnesota second with two hundred and fifty-four pastors.[10] The growth of the Missouri Synod in the second half of the nineteenth century has been quite as phenomenal as the increase in German population in the United States. On its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1872 marking also the founding of the Synodical Conference, the synod could boast of a growth from twelve pastors in 1847, to two hundred and seventy-five pastors in full membership and one hundred and forty affiliates, three hundred and ten members and one hundred and seventy-five affiliated congregations with a total synodical membership of 72,120,[11] approximately sixteen thousand less than the total membership of the General Synod after the schism in 1869. In 1930 the synod could claim a total membership of 1,163,666 with 3,005 pastors of whom 2,972 were voting members.

In spite of the vast extent of territory over which the Missouri Synod has expanded, every effort has been made to

10 Statistical Year Book of the Missouri Synod 1930, 150.
11 Ebenezer, op.cit., 308.

foster a spirit of doctrinal unity and group coherence. A considerable part of the program of pastoral conferences and synodical conventions is still devoted to timely doctrinal discussions. The Concordia Publishing House owned and operated by the synod has assisted materially in maintaining a bond of unity through the publication of carefully edited and censored Lutheran literature and text books in the English and German languages placed at the disposal of the synod's numerous churches and used in the parochial school system. In recent years, as the emergency demand for clergymen has declined with the cessation of immigration, serious consideration has been given to the abandonment of the practical seminary at Springfield and a concentration of all divinity training at St. Louis, in which a common curriculum is to be pursued by all students of theology. In recent years the synod has fallen in line with other denominations by assigning student pastors to the universities at which a considerable number of Lutherans are in attendance. The Walther League, an organization for the young people, was "Missouri's" answer to the founding of the Luther League a fairly liberal and more inclusive organization. To the present time the Missouri Synod has not been particularly successful in creating a form of fraternal organization of its own as a substitute for secular bodies of this kind upon which the Missouri Synod frowns. The more recent acquisition of Valparaiso University was, in all

probability, a movement to counteract the liberalizing influences to which "Missourians" in ever increasing numbers have been subjected by attending the American universities. Whether Valparaiso University can ever rise to a position comparable to the leading universities in the United States without being liberalized itself and contributing toward a modification of "Missouri's" tenets, time alone will tell.

CONCLUSION

Any attempt at detaching the study of American Christianity from the general religious trends in Europe must inevitably lead to erroneous conclusions. The trends in American church history are as much a part of a general movement effecting both America and Europe as are political and economic movements. The flow of European population into the United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries helped to mold the destiny of the church in America, which in turn cast the shadow of its influence upon the church of Europe. Though economic and political factors were chiefly responsible for European emigration religious conditions dare not be overlooked for the immigrants brought to the land of their adoption national and religious convictions and prejudices which found fertile ground in the free soil of America, where they flourished and left an indelible impression upon the church.

Of all the Protestant denominations in the United States the Lutheran Church more than any other was influenced

by the religious currents in Europe. The Lutheran Church of America and Germany had drifted much farther apart than other denominations of identical name and similar doctrines in the two continents. Differences in language, in ties of nationality, social customs and doctrinal outlook created a wider gulf between the two Lutheran groups than existed between the "American Lutherans" and other Protestant denominations. While both kindred groups broke with the rationalism and catch penny materialism of the eighteenth century each was influenced by his particular national environment. In America the Lutheran church of colonial origin had become completely Americanized and had followed national religious trends which found expression in Puritanic Sabbath observance, revivals and temperance. The Lutherans of Germany, on the other hand, evidenced a decided national frame of mind born in a titanic struggle for national existence and a doctrinal attitude which harked back to the confessionalism of the period of the Reformation when the church of Germany sought to free itself from foreign domination. This creedal formalism was further strengthened through the determined efforts of some of the German princes to unite the Protestant groups as a means of counteracting the growing influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Since "American Lutherans" and the new Lutheran immigrants were so widely separated in doctrine and practice a conflict in

which one or the other was likely to give ground could hardly be avoided.

An undertoe of opposition to the distinctly liberal trends in the "American Lutheran" Church was quite evident some years before the wave of German immigration reached considerable proportions. In fact, non-Lutheran divinity schools in the United States showed the effect of the theological revival in Germany by a renewed study of German church literature. Paul Henkel and his sons were among the first "American Lutheran" pastors influenced to some extent by the German theological awakening to refuse to go to the extremes of confessional liberalism pursued by the founders of the General Synod in 1820. They with others of like mind organized the Tennessee synod upon a rigid adherence to the Augsburg confession. Still other Lutherans felt a failure on the part of the "American Lutheran" church to identify itself more specifically with the traditional church must lead to its final destruction.

In spite of the natural trend toward denominational consciousness in the United States in the second quarter of the nineteenth century caused by the keen rivalry for sectarian advantage in the West, the Lutheran church would never have turned so far to the right had it not been for German

immigration. Many of these immigrants firmly rooted in their confessional and national convictions became more zealous in America for fear their new free environment might endanger their doctrinal convictions, so dear to them. The charges of religious bigotry, Romanism and national exclusiveness preferred against them did much to strengthen their group coherence, and determination to perpetuate their cultural traditions. More than any other of the Lutheran immigrant groups, the Saxons went resolutely to work in uniting the confessional Lutherans and battering down the walls of "American Lutheranism".

In statesman like leadership and ability to take advantage of new opportunities the Saxons, founders of the Missouri Synod, were second to none of the other Lutheran groups in America. The broad cultural education and sincere religious convictions, born in a severe spiritual struggle coupled with intimate connections with persons of prominence in the several Lutheran states of Germany, enabled the "Missouri" leaders to adapt their church organization to a new environment and bridge the gap between the new of America and the old of Germany without in any way sacrificing their doctrinal position. While the emphasis placed upon the use of the German language for cultural and religious reasons established a close bond of fellowship between the old and new immigrant the synod's unswerving acceptance and propagation of loyalty and implicit obedience to constituted political

authority performed an invaluable service for its alien membership and the government of the United States. The Missouri Synod's congregational and synodical organization was less objectionable than that of any other to the German immigrant who came to America prejudiced against the hierarchical or consistorial form of church administration and autocratic political government. Through the pressure of circumstances the leaders of "Missouri" had successfully adjusted their church organization to an American environment by establishing complete congregational autonomy and lay and clerical equality in all matters effecting the respective congregations as well as the synodical body. Fortunately for "Missouri", through Walther's leadership and scholarly endeavor the readjustment was so harmonized with the doctrines of the Church Fathers, the Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century and the Scriptures, that the new order found ready acceptance in America and struck root in the Lutheran church of Saxon Germany.

In the second and third quarter of the nineteenth century various forces converged to produce a more positive confessional consciousness among the Lutherans of America. German theological literature which emphasized the old historical symbols and doctrines found its way into the United States and acted as a leaven. Lutheran immigrants, permeated with a

pride of nationality and loyalty to their religious and social institution, who came to America in ever increasing numbers prepared to unite with the confessional German Lutherans rather than with the American Lutherans who seemed to them real strangers. Once in America the immigrants national and religious consciousness was kept alive and stimulated by the confessional literature of the Missouri Synod. Through its efficient organization and the spread of doctrinal propaganda the Missouri Synod did not only gather within its fold the majority of the Lutheran newcomers but was eminently successful in spreading discord in "American Lutheran" ranks and turning the middle of the road groups into more strongly symbolical channels and prevented their union with the General Synod.

In the fifties a decided turn toward Lutheran orthodoxy was apparent. By this time the more conservative faction of the General Synod began to assert itself and voice a strong protest against the liberal tendencies through its own publications. The force of its protest gained such an advantage that the determination to sieze control of the synod by sheer force of numbers brought on the synodical disruption of the General Synod in 1868. When the synod emerged about fifty years later as the United Lutheran Church in America it had rid itself of much of its latitudinarianism and was organized upon a confessional Lutheran basis occupying somewhat

the position held by the synods of Wisconsin and Minnesota in the sixties. Today leaders of the United Lutheran Church in America are ready to sound the clarion call of Walther, "Back to Luther and the Reformation".

While the American Lutheran Church was split asunder by internal dissensions and the disintegrating effects of a Civil War, the Missouri Synod had not only remained in tact but had gathered strength and momentum. The success which had crowned its efforts in the first quarter century of its existence made its leaders adamant against doctrinal compromise. In the course of the sixties and early seventies, "Missouri" was able so to outmaneuver the synods which followed a middle of the road course as to make it incumbent upon them to unite with "Missouri" into a Synodical Conference in 1872, if they hoped to check in their synods the growth of dissension and retain their group identity.

Now that the United Lutheran Church has positively turned toward the center and has rejected the program of Schmucker, Kurtz and Sprecher one wonders whether the Missouri Synod will eventually merge with its leading rival. Should such a shift come it is hardly probable that the movement will be led by "Missouri's" clerical members, for through a unified and soundly confessional education the clergy have become as much a part of a scholastic system as the members of various

Catholic religious orders. Any break within the ranks in the near future may be expected to come from the laymen. As immigration has ceased the synod has found it necessary to adjust itself to a changing environment by becoming more essentially an English Lutheran Church. With the passing of the German language one of the incentives for supporting parochial schools is rapidly vanishing, and a greater number of "Missouri" children are annually attending the public elementary schools. In 1930 out of a total synodical membership of over 400,000 below the approximate age of thirteen, only 79,965 were enrolled in 1,339 parochial schools in a synod of more than double that number of congregations. It is hardly probable that the members of the synod will escape the leveling effect of the American high schools and colleges in which the "Missourians" are enrolling in greater numbers from year to year. What the trends and the outcome will be is a matter to be determined by the future historian.

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